

THE
PROPHET JEREMIAH.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

WE are now about to enter upon the inspired writings of *Jeremiah*. This book of God very properly follows that of *Isaiah*; not indeed according to the order of time, for several of the other Prophets placed after *Jeremiah* ministered in the Church of God, between the period of *Isaiah* and *Jeremiah*, in their services; but from the particular and especial nature, of their distinct commissions. *Isaiah* was directed in the view of gospel days, to bring glad tidings of good. *Jeremiah* was commissioned with tidings of evil. *Isaiah* is therefore, and not unsuitably, called the *evangelical* Prophet, and *Jeremiah* the *mournful* Prophet.

The Reader is called upon, at the very entrance of *Jeremiah's* writings, to notice his commission and authority. The Lord declared to him at his first call, that before he came forth from the womb, he had ordained him *to be a prophet unto the nations*. So that *Jeremiah's* warrant stands unquestionable. It also pleased the Great Head of the Church, to extend the labours of *Jeremiah* to a more than ordinary length. He speaks of beginning his services, in the thirteenth year of *Josiah*, the son of *Amon*, king of *Judah*: and we know, that those services continued to the time that *Nebuzaradan*, captain in the king of *Babylon's* army, carried away *Israel* captive to *Babylon*: a period of between forty and fifty years.

The general scope and tendency of *Jeremiah's* prophecy corresponded to the times in which he lived. The Church was then sunk indeed most awfully. And the Lord was preparing for his people the chastisement of a *seventy years* captivity. *Jeremiah* laboured therefore under such distressing views in prospect of the evil he lived to see accomplished: so that the one object of his ministry, was to call the people to repentance. Hence we find the usual strain of his sermons, is reproof and exhortation. Here and there, however, the Prophet was led by the Holy Ghost, to speak most fully and blessedly, of the Person, Work, and Offices of him that was to come, *to bring his prisoners out of captivity, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord*.

The æra of the Church, in which this blessed book of prophecy was written, seems to have been about six hundred years before the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ. I only detain the Reader here, as in the entrance upon our perusal of every preceding book, in calling upon him to join my

spirit in prayer, before the high throne of God in Christ, that an unction from God the Holy Ghost may be upon both Writer and Reader, while going over these sacred records: that while it is promised in the Prophets, *all the children shall be taught of the Lord*; we may be proved to be the children of God in being taught of him. And as our ever adorable Lord, graciously marked the true evidences of divine teaching, in that all that were taught of the Father of coming to him; we may be of the happy number, who came to him, *to whom give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins.* Amen.

CHAP. I.

CONTENTS.

The Chapter opens with the account of Jeremiah's being called to the ministry. He is instructed by two visions. The Lord's commands to him, and his promise to be with him.

THE words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin:

The Prophet opens the Chapter with his name and family. Jeremiah's name is not without signification, for it implies, being *raised by the Lord*: and he was eminently so, as the sequel of this chapter sheweth. He mentions his family also and place: perhaps, by way of proof, that he was of the priesthood order. *Anathoth* was a small city or village, a little distance from Jerusalem.

2 To whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign.

3 It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month.

Having given his name, and family, and place of abode, he now mentions his commission, and the time of receiving it. So that the whole period of the Prophet's ministry, like the contents of a book, is here marked in the first leaf of his writings. If the Reader will be at the pains of enquiry, he will find, that the whole period of Jeremiah's ministry was somewhat more than forty years.

4 Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

5 Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee, *and* I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

I have often read this Chapter with particular pleasure, and marked with much emphasis what is contained in these verses: for in them we find the most decisive testimony, to that distinguishing attribute and perfection of Jehovah, his foreknowledge and ordination. Who that reads these verses, can, for a moment question, the purpose, counsel, and will of the Lord? *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning.* And to suppose otherwise, would be to deny God's sovereignty and eternal wisdom. Hence our Lord, in his Father's with-holding discernment from the wise and prudent, and revealing himself to babes, refers all into this one cause, as an unanswerable conclusion; *Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight,* Matt. xi. 25, 26. I beg the Reader to pause over the subject, and as he ponders the vast thought, let him ask his own heart, whether the same sovereign power that ordained *Jeremiah* for a Prophet, and *Paul* for an Apostle from the womb, hath sanctified and revealed his Son in the Reader's soul, to the purpose of salvation, *through the faith that is in Christ Jesus?* Gal. i. 15, 16.

6 Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD, behold, I cannot speak, for I *am* a child.

7 ¶ But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I *am* a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak.

8 Be not afraid of their faces, for I *am* with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.

9 Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth, and the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.

10 See, I have this day set thee over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.

Reader! do not fail to remark, how humbling grace is in the soul. Before the Prophet was conscious of the work wrought in him, the blessed effects were made to appear, in a lowliness suited to the mercy. *He giveth grace to the humble.* And let the Reader further observe, how the Lord removed the Prophet's fears by the sovereignty of his grace. It is remarkable, that each of the Prophets, *Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel,* at their introduction into their prophetic office, were ordained by an outward visible sign, as well as by the inward, illuminating, and confirming grace. *Isaiah, vi. 6, 7. Ezek. iii. 1, 2, 3.*

And what confidence did these gracious ordinations inspire in the minds of all? I hope the Reader will not, while looking at the ordination service of Prophets in the Old Testament, overlook and pass by the ordination of the Apostles under the New. Behold Jesus in that interesting season, when sending forth his disciples to teach and to preach in the synagogues. Luke, x. 1—20. So again, after his resurrection, John, xx. 21, 22. So again in the moment of his departure, Luke xxiv. 45 to the end. Matt. xxviii. 18 to the end. And Reader! is it not so now? Can there be any ordination truly blessed, except Jesus commissions? Oh! that every one that goeth forth into the ministry, might know, like *Jeremiah*, his warrant, and be convinced, that the same Almighty Spirit which sent forth Barnabas and Saul to the work, sends forth all his faithful servants now to the labouring *in the word and doctrine!* and accompanies them with his presence, Acts, xiii. 2, 3, 4.

11 ¶ Moreover, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond-tree.

12 Then said the LORD unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it.

13 And the word of the LORD came unto me the second time, saying, What seest thou? And I said, I see a seething pot, and the face thereof is toward the north.

14 Then the LORD said unto me, Out of the north, an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land.

15 For lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, saith the LORD, and they shall come, and they shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah.

16 And I will utter my judgments against them, touching all their wickedness, who have forsaken me, and have burnt incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands.

The Lord was pleased, we find, both by word and by vision, to confirm the Prophet in his new appointment. And the Lord which raised up to the Prophet's mind these images, took care to instruct his mind how to interpret them, that nothing of divine teaching might fall to the ground.

17 ¶ Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I find thee before them.

18 For behold, I have made thee this day a fenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land.

19 And they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I *am* with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee.

How needful must faithfulness be in the service of the Lord? And where the Lord gives grace to his poor servants to be faithful, he will give strength to bear them up against all their foes. An *iron pillar* and *brasen walls*, are strong figures, to intimate, that the arrows of the enemy with all their fury will be thrown against them. But as iron pillars and brasen walls are simply for defence, and not for injury: how beautifully do those similitudes teach, that the servants of the Lord are not to strive and repel carnal attacks, with the same weapons, but to be like their Master, *who when reviled, reviled not again*. The Lord hath undertaken his servants cause, and he will recompense vengeance on his and their enemies, Deut. xxxii. 43.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let us, as we enter upon the subject of Jeremiah's ministry, and especially while we behold him thus divinely called, and divinely appointed; gather the several interesting instructions such an history furnisheth, for our own personal improvement, and mark, in what an endearing point this scripture speaks to us.

See Reader in the first place, the love of God over his people, in thus raising up a faithful servant, even in the worst of times, to speak of grace and mercy; when the rebellions of his people merited nothing but punishment. Behold! in the next point of view, the Lord's predilection of *Jeremiah*, and the blessedness of being thus set apart as he was, for the service of the Lord from the womb. Mark, moreover, how the Lord that called him distinguished him with his favour, and what he set him apart to, he fitted him for. And lastly, fail not to observe, how the Lord undertook to carry him safely, from all his enemies, and to defend and preserve him in all his exercises.

And while we thus behold all these blessings in the case of the Prophet *Jeremiah*, let us be on the look out, that in every minute circumstance that concerns the Church of Jesus now, and the special interests of every individual believer, the Lord is still carrying on the same gracious purposes, and both ordaining and sanctifying the whole of events to his own glory and his Church's welfare.

Jesus was the great Prophet to the nations, and to our nation surely, where we trust the Lord hath a Church. Oh! that all his sent servants, did but know and feel, as *Jeremiah* knew and felt, and in the service of their Lord became more anxious to win souls than to gain a kingdom. Reader! it will be your mercy and mine, if, before we close our meditation on this sweet Chapter, we can find the Lord's purpose concerning ourselves, as fully confirmed in grace as his was, and under the teaching of God the Holy Ghost, we may discover, such evident proofs of our calling and election, in all that concerns our everlasting welfare, that we may enjoy the full sense of that blessed scripture, in which Jehovah saith, *I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.*

CHAP. II.

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The Prophet is here entering upon his ministry. He begins with expostulation: and he carries it on, in a way of reproof and correction through the whole chapter.

MOREOVER the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

2 ¶ Go, and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land *that was* not sown.

3 Israel *was* holiness unto the LORD, *and* the first-fruits of his increase: all that devour him shall offend, evil shall come upon them, saith the LORD.

I pray the Reader to observe, the graciousness of God's dealings with his people, even when he is about to reprove them. He puts them in mind of their past affection, and when matters were different with them, from what they now are: and this serves to heighten to their view his grace, and the unreasonableness of their backsliding. Reader! mark how the Lord takes notice of the smallest affections of his people. What could the Lord say more sweet and gracious than what is here said: *I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals.* Oh! thou gracious Lord! Should any poor backslider of thine, read this blessed scripture; oh give the poor soul grace to discover herefrom, how the bowels of thy love yearn over precious souls, in their wanderings, and that thou dost remember them still. See Chap. xxxi. 18, 19, 20.

4 Hear ye the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel.

5 ¶ Thus saith the LORD, What iniquity have

your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?

6 Neither said they, Where *is* the LORD, that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts, and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt?

7 And I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof, and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made mine heritage an abomination.

8 The priests said not, Where *is* the LORD? and they that handle the law, knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after *things that do not profit.*

Having put his people in mind of what had passed; and given them to understand that the Lord had not forgotten the smallest tendencies of their affection towards him; he now begins to remonstrate with them for all their ingratitude and rebellion. And in order to give the greater force to his complaint, he challengeth them to shew cause, if any thing in him could have left them the least apology. Reader! think what an aggravation it is to all our transgressions, that they are against the best of all friends, the kindest of all relations. I know not what *you* feel in the review; but for myself, I scruple not to say, that the self-loathing, I sometimes experience, in the recollection of what passeth in a fallen nature, is to me abundantly increased, from the consideration, that our offences are all directed against God. It would be impossible to offend in any single instance, had we not first, for the time, lost all reverence and affection also for the person of Jesus. Every expostulation therefore seemeth to speak in the words before us, as though Jesus stood and said; *what iniquity have you found in me, that you are gone far from me?* If Jesus thus speaks, surely it cuts to the heart.

9 ¶ Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the LORD, and with your children's children will I plead.

10 For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing.

11 Hath a nation changed *their* gods, which *are* yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory, for *that which* doth not profit.

Observe Reader! the Lord is still pleading. It is the day of grace, not the hour of judgment. And of all the sottish sins of Israel surely; this exceeded the whole, that after knowing the one, true, and only Lord of heaven and earth, they actually took up with idols. A thing hardly to be believed possible. Why the poor ignorant nations around, were never known to change their dunghill gods, for other dunghill gods: if Egypt worshipped the cat; they never could be prevailed upon to make an exchange for any other idol; such was their veneration from father to son. But Israel, the Lord's chosen, the Lord's people, and to whom the Lord had made himself known, by signs and wonders, and a mighty stretched out arm: Israel took up with dunghill gods also, and worshipped they knew not what! Oh! what a degraded state is man brought to, by the fall?

12 Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the LORD.

13 For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, *and* hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.

Reader! this is not the first time that we meet with such appeals to heaven, and to other parts of the inanimate creation: for if man will not hear, to whom shall respect be had? Isaiah, l. 2. Deut. iv. 6. But do not overlook the Lord's tenderness for his people, in the very moment of charging them with such wonderful folly. The Lord calls them *his people* still. Precious thought! In Jesus they are beheld, and in Jesus beloved. Rom. xi. 28. The figure of a cistern, and that a *broken* cistern, which never can hold water, is uncommonly striking, by way of shewing the folly of taking up with any creature comfort, to the forgetfulness of the infinite and eternally satisfying fulness of the Creator. To leave God in Christ, and to take confidence in man, are two mother evils, which bring forth thousands from their womb.

14 *Is* Israel a servant? is he a home-born *slave*? why is he spoiled?

15 The young lions roared upon him, *and* yelled, and they made his land waste: his cities are burnt without inhabitants.

16 Also the children of Noph and Tahapanes have broken the crown of thy head.

17 Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in

that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, when he led thee by the way ?

18 And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor ? or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river ?

19 Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee : know therefore and see, that *it is* an evil *thing* and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear *is* not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.

20 ¶ For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands, and thou saidst, I will not transgress : when upon every high hill, and under every green tree, thou wanderest playing the harlot.

21 Yet I had planted thee a noble vine wholly a right seed, how then art thou turned into a degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me ?

22 For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much sope, *yet* thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord GOD.

23 How canst thou say, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Balaam ? see thy way in the valley : know what thou hast done : *thou art* a swift dromedary traversing her ways.

24 A wild ass used to the wilderness, *that* snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure, in her occasion who can turn her away ? all they that seek her, will not weary themselves, in her month they shall find her.

25 Withhold thy foot from being unshod, and thy throat from thirst : but thou saidst, There is no hope. No, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.

26 As the thief is ashamed when he is found :

so is the house of Israel ashamed; they, their kings, their princes, and their priests, and their prophets,

27 Saying to a stock, Thou *art* my father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth: for they have turned *their* back unto me, and not *their* face: but in the time of their trouble they will say, Arise, and save us.

28 But where *are* thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble: for *according* to the number of thy cities, are thy gods, O Judah.

29 Wherefore will ye plead with me? ye all have transgressed against me, saith the LORD.

30 In vain have I smitten your children, they received no correction; your own sword hath devoured your prophets, like a destroying lion.

I include all these verses under one view, as the doctrine is one and the same, though varied with several similitudes. But the whole is intended to shew, to what a degenerate state the Church was reduced; how the rebellion of the people naturally became their own correction; and yet, in the midst of all, the Lord still watched over Israel for good, and although suffering them to be cast down, would not cast them off. Isaiah, xxvii. 2, 3, 4, 5.

31 ¶ O generation, see ye the word of the LORD: have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness? wherefore say my people, We are lords, we will come no more unto thee?

32 Can a maid forget her ornaments, *or* a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number.

33 Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love? therefore hast thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways.

34 Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents: I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these.

35 Yet thou sayest, Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me; behold, I

will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned.

36 Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way? thou also shalt be ashamed of Egypt, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria.

37 Yea, thou shalt go forth from him, and thine hands upon thine head: for the LORD hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them.

Never surely, was there afforded a more lively instance of the gracious purpose of God's unalterable love to his people, than what this Chapter affords, from beginning to end. The Lord sends the Prophet in the opening, to tell the people of God's remembrance of Israel's first-love: and in the close of the Chapter, the Lord tells them, that though they shall not prosper in their confidence, yet he thereby intimates, that grace shall at length prevail. Through the whole, and every part of the prophet's sermon, we discern, with clear marks all along, that the Lord hath mercy in store, and *will not cast away his people whom he foreknew*, Rom. xi. 1—5.

REFLECTIONS.

PAUSE my soul over the Prophet's sermon, and remark how graciously the Lord pleads with his people for their good; how reluctant the Lord seemeth to give them up, and with what gentle exhortations he reasons with them, on his patience and their determined obstinacy.

Look through the history of the Church then, and look to the Church now: and ask and see, whether we are in better circumstances than they, or more deserving? Did ever Zion languish more than in the present hour? Were ever the interests of Jesus less regarded? Where shall we direct our attention to find any that prefer the prosperity of the Church above their chief joy? My soul! what sayeth thine own personal experience to this statement? While thou lamentest in secret, the little conquests of Jesus's grace in thine own heart; canst thou say, as one of old did, in beholding the sorrowful state of the Church around thee: *rivers of waters run down mine eyes because men keep not thy law*. Alas! *who is grieved for the affliction of Joseph*.

Oh! thou great Head of thy Church, and of thy people! Oh! Lord Jesus! take to thyself thine own glorious cause, and come forth by thy Holy Spirit, in the midst of thy Church! Remember Lord when *Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the first-fruits of his increase*. And as all Israel's holiness was in thee, and is in thee for ever: do thou Lord stir up to thyself an holy zeal, in the hearts of thy people. Thou knowest Lord, that were we *to wash with nitre and take much soap*, still would *our iniquity be marked before thee*. *Take away therefore Lord all our iniquity, and receive us graciously*,

and turn to thyself a people with one consent, to call on the Lord: so shall thy name be praised from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same; and the name of our Lord Jesus shall be great among the Gentiles. Amen.

CHAP. III.

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This Chapter is a continuation of the same sermon as the former. Added to what was there said, in a way of expostulation, the Lord is pleased to follow it up, with invitations, and of the most gracious nature.

THEY say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the LORD.

2 Lift up thine eyes unto the high places, and see where thou hast not been lien with: in the ways hast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness, and thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms, and with thy wickedness.

3 Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain, and thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed.

It is the uniform custom of human life, that, if a woman prove unfaithful to her husband, and the thing be notorious and publicly known, by her open departure from him, never is she permitted to return to him again. There are none such compassionate husbands among men as to allow it. But, saith the Lord, with me things shall not be so. I will receive my Church, though she hath set up her idols in every place of her iniquity. Reader! do pause I beseech you, and admire the abundant grace of the Lord. In all things, *his ways are not our ways, nor his thoughts our thoughts*. Jesus indeed seems to take occasion from the unworthiness of our poor fallen nature, to display and magnify the riches of his grace. Isaiah, lv. 8, 9. Romans v. 20, 21. The *Arabian* in the wilderness is a fine image, to illustrate the earnestness with which Israel had revolted from the Lord. It had been, not the casual inadvertency of temptation, but the deliberate purpose and contrivance of the heart.

4 Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou *art* the guide of my youth?

5 Will he reserve *his anger* for ever? will he

keep *it* to the end? Behold, thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldest.

This is a most beautiful and gracious observation of the Lord's, to shew, what might be reasonably expected, from the overwhelming kindness of the Lord. When grace becomes more abundant, it overpowers our sin, disarms the sinner, and constrains him, as the Prodigal in the parable, to return to his Father. Luke, xv. 17, 18, 19.

6 ¶ The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen *that* which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain, and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot.

7 And I said, after she had done all these *things*, Turn thou unto me; but she returned not: and her treacherous sister Judah saw *it*.

8 And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery, I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce: yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.

9 And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones, and with stocks.

10 And yet for all this, her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the LORD.

It should seem, that this is the opening of a new sermon; perhaps it was preached at a different period from the former: but the subject is the same. A sad account is given of both kingdoms, Judah and Jerusalem. The Reader will not fail to recollect, that the division of the nation continued as it had long been, at this time, when the Prophet Jeremiah exercised his ministry. Ten tribes had revolted from the house of David, and became formed into a separate kingdom. But in one point they both agreed: namely, in their rebellion against God. How graciously the Lord takes occasion from the treachery of the one, and the backsliding of the other, to recommend the exceeding riches of his love and forbearance. The figure of a divorce is uncommonly striking, and it should seem, that the Lord was pleased with it, both to represent his love and union with our nature; and the incorrigible hardness and insensibility of the human heart. *Hosea*, that had been prophesying to the Church some ages before, dwelt very largely in representing Israel's unworthiness, under the same figure. *Hosea*, Chapter i. ii. and iii.

11 And the LORD said unto me, The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah.

12 ¶ Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD, *and* I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I *am* merciful, saith the LORD, *and* I will not keep *anger* for ever.

13 Only acknowledge thine iniquity that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD.

14 Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD, for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion.

Nothing can more highly illustrate the riches of grace, than what is here said, on the subject of divine mercy. Israel was about to go into Babylon, and there the Prophet is particularly directed to proclaim the invitation of mercy. The Lord had made a provision for the recovery of his people in all ages: for he had long before caused it to be recorded, that in all places, whether they were scattered for their sins, they should call to remembrance their trespasses, and if there their unhumiliated heart then accepted the punishment of their iniquity, that then the Lord would remember his covenant, and have mercy upon them. Levit. xxvi. 40, 41, 42. And do not Reader, for a moment lose sight of the wonderful condescension expressed by the Lord, in acknowledging his alliance with his people. Yes! Jesus hath indeed married our nature, and will not hate his own flesh. Oh the unequalled grace and mercy, of our glorious Emmanuel! Isaiah, liv. 5. Ephes. v. 25—32.

15 And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

16 And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land; in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind, neither shall they remember it, neither shall they visit *it*, neither shall *that* be done any more.

17 At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD, and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem : neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.

18 In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north, to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers.

Reader! doth not your heart go forth, at the reading of those blessed promises, with an earnestness of desire, that the Lord would fulfil them, and give his people pastors indeed according to his own heart! Oh! that the Lord would send forth faithful, disinterested ministers, in his Churches, and among his people. If this were once the case, Judah and Israel, Jews and Gentiles, would walk together, and all would be of one heart and of one mind, in the service and fellowship of the Lord Jesus! Galat. iii. 26 to the end.

19 But I said, How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? And I said, Thou shalt call me, My father, and shalt not turn away from me.

20 ¶ Surely, *as* a wife treacherously departeth from her husband: so have you dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the LORD.

21 A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping *and* supplications of the children of Israel: for they have perverted their way, *and* they have forgotten the LORD their God.

A difficulty here seemeth to have arisen in the views of such unspeakable mercy; how shall the Lord, consistent with his divine perfections, take home to his favour sinners so ungracious? And none but God himself can remove the difficulty. The privilege of adoption in Christ, is the only possible means by which the Lord can pardon sin, and receive the sinner. This Jehovah hath provided. And he that hath provided the means, will take care it shall be effectual to the end. Reader! think of our adoption privileges, in Christ Jesus, and bless the glorious author of them. Gal. iv. 6. Romans, viii. 14—17.

22 Return, ye backsliding children, *and* I will heal your backslidings: behold, we come unto thee, for thou *art* the LORD our God.

23 Truly in vain *is* salvation hoped for from the hills, *and* from the multitude of mountains: truly in the LORD our God is the salvation of Israel.

24 For shame hath devoured the labour of our fathers from our youth; their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters.

25 We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us: for we have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God.

The Lord still causeth his grace to triumph over the unworthiness of his Israel, until at length, the heart is subdued and overcome. What a sweet and blessed conclusion is made to the subject, and to the chapter together! And what it was with Israel then, so is it with all the praying seed of Israel now: when Christ is seen, and known, and felt by his Holy Spirit in the heart, such will be the language of every child of God: *truly in vain is salvation looked for elsewhere: in the Lord shall one say, have I righteousness and strength; even to him shall men come, and all that believe in him shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end.* Isaiah, xlv. 24, 25. Acts, iv. 12.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED Lord Jesus! how can I read in this Chapter the unfaithfulness of Israel, in departing from thee, who hast been the kind and loving husband of thy Church for ever; without calling to my recollection my baseness and unfaithfulness also. Surely thou art, as thou hast said in this Chapter, married to us, not only in the assumption of our nature, but in the particular and personal union with every individual soul of thine, whom by thy Spirit thou hast made *willing in the day of thy power.* And notwithstanding the lowness of our birth, our loathsomeness by nature, and unworthiness by sin! still hath the Lord of life and glory made us one with himself, that we might be *heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.* And is it possible for me to call to mind, that after such unheard of condescension on the part of the Son of God, as to marry our nature, and to unite every individual person of his people to himself, that, I like a treacherous wife, departing from her husband, should depart from thee? Oh! Lord! what an awful state must our nature be reduced to by the fall! And doth my God and Saviour, notwithstanding these horrible provocations, doth he really say: though *thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again unto me, saith the Lord!* Oh! for

grace, to feel the full influence of such constraining love, and to cry out with an earnestness suited to the affection: *behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God!*

And do thou Lord! fulfil all those sweet and gracious promises. Do thou heal all our backslidings: do thou do, as thou hast said, take us *one of a city, and two of a family, and bring us to Zion.* Put a spirit of adoption into our hearts, O Lord; and both provide the means for our recovery by grace, and give us strength to make use of them, that we may henceforth call thee Father, and thou mayest put us among the Children. And Lord! let that gracious word of thine be accomplished; let our Pastors be of thine own giving, and men after thine own heart; that we may be indeed fed with knowledge and understanding. Precious Lord Jesus! send to us the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, to teach us, and guide us, and to lead us, into all truth. Then shall we indeed know, under his divine teaching, that thou alone art *the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof.* Amen.

CHAP. IV.

CONTENTS.

* *This Chapter, in the opening, is an address to Israel. The subject then relates to Judah and Jerusalem. Both are to one and the same amount; namely, God's gracious call to his people, to return to him, from all their backslidings.*

IF thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the LORD, I return unto me: and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight, then shalt thou not remove.

2 And thou shalt swear, The LORD liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory.

Is there not here a sweet breaking out, in pointing to Him who is the Lord our righteousness? For in whom are the nations to be blessed, but in Jesus; or in whom can they glory? I pray the Reader to compare the passage with those scriptures, and then judge for himself. Psalm lxxii. 17. Isaiah, lxxv. 16. Jeremiah, xxiii. 6. 1 Cor. i. 30.

3 ¶ For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.

4 Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my

fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.

5 Declare ye in Judah, and publish in Jerusalem, and say, Blow ye the trumpet in the land: cry, gather together, and say, Assemble yourselves, and let us go into the defenced cities.

6 Set up the standard towards Zion: retire, stay not; for I will bring evil from the north, and a great destruction.

7 The lion is come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way; he is gone forth from his place to make thy land desolate, and thy cities shall be laid waste without an inhabitant.

8 For this gird you with sackcloth, lament and howl: for the fierce anger of the LORD is not turned from us.

9 And it shall come to pass at that day, saith the LORD, that the heart of the king shall perish, and the heart of the princes: and the priests shall be astonished, and the prophets shall wonder.

The Prophet here opens his commission to the men of Judah and Jerusalem; and in the prospect of the Babylonish captivity, now hastening, admonisheth them to seek the Lord. The Prophet, like a faithful preacher, dwells upon the same subject, as the Lord preached to him, at his ordination. See Chap. i. 14 to the end. The Lion from the thicket is a strong figure, to set forth the fury of the Enemy. And when the Lord gives the authority, what a roaring Lion indeed, is every foe. Precious Jesus! thou art the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and while thou art for us, more are they, than all that can be against us. Rev. v. 5. 2 Kings, vi. 15, 16, 17. If the heart of all men fail in their own strength: those whom thou hast made kings and priests to God and the Father, will faint not, whilst thou art their strength and their portion for ever. Rev. i. 6.

10 Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD, surely thou hast greatly deceived this people, and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall have peace; whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul.

I read this verse alone, in order, by praying over it, to seek instruction from the Lord, for the right apprehension of it. *Jeremiah* could not mean to charge the Lord, with either the cause or the consequence of the people's deception. The lying prophets, such

as *Hananiah* (see Chapter xxviii.) by preaching peace, had deceived them: and as he presumed to come to the people in the Lord's name, as well as Jeremiah, they might be said in this sense, to be deceived by the Lord. And if for their rebellion, the Lord gave them up to believe a lye; though the deception was their own, yet God's judgment was in it. Certain it is, that there is *no evil in the city, but the Lord hath done it*; that is, permitted it. Amos, iii. 6. But while the sovereignty of the Lord is still the same, the evil of transgression is the sinner's, James, i. 13. Ezek. xiv. 1—11.

11 At that time shall it be said to this people, and to Jerusalem, A dry wind of the high places in the wilderness toward the daughter of my people, not to fan, nor to cleanse,

12 *Even* a full wind from those *places* shall come unto me: now also will I give sentence against them.

13 Behold, he shall come up as clouds, and his chariots *shall be* as a whirlwind: his horses are swifter than eagles: woe unto us, for we are spoiled.

14 O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved: how long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?

15 For a voice declareth from Dan, and publisheth affliction from mount Ephraim.

16 Make ye mention to the nations, behold, publish against Jerusalem, *that* watchers come from a far country, and give out their voice against the cities of Judah.

17 As keepers of a field are they against her round about: because she hath been rebellious against me, saith the LORD.

18 Thy way and thy doings have procured these *things* unto thee, this *is* thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart.

Under those strong images, of a dry wind and a full wind, and a whirlwind, are set forth the judgments of the Lord. But under all, I pray the Reader to observe, how the Lord fully proves, that the evil is in his people, the remedy is in the Lord. Hosea, xiii. 9.

19 ¶ My bowels, my bowels, I am pained at my very heart, my heart maketh a noise in me, I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.

20 Destruction upon destruction is cried, for the whole land is spoiled : suddenly are my tents spoiled, *and* my curtains in a moment ?

21 How long shall I see the standard, *and* hear the sound of the trumpet ?

22 For my people *is* foolish, they have not known me, they *are* sottish children, and they have none understanding : they *are* wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

I hope the Reader will pause over these verses, and remark the concern of the Prophet. And when he hath done this, let him ask himself what ought to be the concern of the Lord's prophets : I mean his ministers in the present hour, over the coming, and to come, distresses of our Zion. Was there ever a period in history, so much like the one Jeremiah here complains of, as the present ? Did ever Jeremiah's prophecy suit the Church more than now ? And is it not a pity, yea, a sad concern, that so many are at ease in Zion, while her best interests, and the glorious gospel of Jesus, are so little regarded. See Joel, i. 13. Amos, vi. 1—6.

23 I beheld the earth, and lo, *it was* without form and void : and the heavens, and they *had* no light.

24 I beheld the mountains, and lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly.

25 I beheld, and lo, there *was* no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled.

26 I beheld, and lo, the fruitful place *was* a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the LORD, *and* by his fierce anger.

27 For thus hath the LORD said, The whole land shall be desolate ; yet will I not make a full end.

28 For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black : because I have spoken

it, I have purposed *it*, and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it.

29 The whole city shall flee, for the noise of the horsemen and bowmen, they shall go into thickets, and climb up upon the rocks: every city *shall be* forsaken, and not a man dwell therein.

30 And *when* thou *art* spoiled, what wilt thou do? Though thou clothest thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou rentest thy face with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair, *thy* lovers will despise thee, they will seek thy life.

31 For I have heard a voice as of a woman in travail, *and* the anguish as of her that bringeth forth her first child, the voice of the daughter of Zion: *that* bewaileth herself, *that* spreadeth her hands, *saying*, Woe is me now, for my soul is wearied because of murderers.

There is somewhat uncommonly solemn and striking, when the Lord by his servants, as in many parts of scripture, calls upon the heavenly bodies, and the inanimate parts of nature, to lament by their appearances, the degeneracy and rebellion of his people. The weeping of the clouds, and the blushing of the sun, are strong figures to this amount. Isaiah, i. 2. Deut. xxxii. 1. What a gracious and affectionate appeal, the Lord makes in the close of this Chapter. *When thou art spoiled what wilt thou do?* Oh! for grace, that sinners in the present hour would lay this question of the Lord's to the heart, until the same cry as the man of Tarsus issued from the heart; *Lord! what wouldst thou have me to do?* Acts ix. 6.

REFLECTIONS.

STAND still my soul, and ponder over this Chapter, and look up for the divine teachings of God the Holy Ghost, that none of the words here contained may fall to the ground. Were there ever more striking evidences given of the grace and long-suffering of the Lord? Were there ever more decisive testimonies manifested, of the obduracy and impenitency of man? May we not take up the Lord's own words, and say: *What could have been done more to his vineyard, that he did not unto it?* Precious Lord Jesus! oh for some gracious accompaniments of thy Holy Spirit, with thine holy word in the present hour, that thine Israel now, may never despise the riches of thy goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; but know and feel that the goodness of God *leadeth to repentance*.

Ye ministers of my God! learn from this statement of sorrow in

the Prophet, to put on bowels of mercies, and to feel true soul concern for the present desolations of the Church of Jesus. Blind Watchmen, and blind Guides cannot become interested for the saving knowledge of Christ in others, who are destitute of it themselves. But do ye who know Jesus, unceasingly tell of his preciousness to all around. Let Zion which is so dear to Jesus, be dear to you. And as you know that her name is engraven on the palms of *his* hands: so let her interests be always uppermost in *your* heart. Hath Jesus taught you? oh commend him as a Teacher to all that are ignorant. Hath Jesus saved you from your sins? commend him as a Saviour to other poor sinners. Hath Jesus made you willing in the day of his power? pray to Him that the day of his power may be manifested in many a heart. Zion will again flourish in the church of Jesus if the love of Jesus, and a regard for the interests of his Church, flourisheth in the hearts of his ministers and people. Compassionate Redeemer! let it no longer be said of any of those who call themselves ministers of the gospel: *all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.*

CHAP. V.

CONTENTS.

The same subject is prosecuted through this Chapter, as formed the contents of the former. Here is the call of God upon a degenerate people, joined with gracious promises and invitations of mercy.

RUN ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be *any* that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it.

2 And though they say, The LORD liveth, surely they swear falsely.

If we read these verses with a gospel comment, the amount of them will be similar to what the Apostle made on one of the Psalms of David. See Psalm xiv. 2, 3. Romans, iii. 10—26. But Reader! cannot you and I find a man that hath executed righteousness and judgment in the earth? Is there not *one* man in this our spiritual Sodom, to stand in the gap, and turn away the wrath of heaven? Pause. *What think ye of Christ?* Oh! thou whose name is *Wonderful!* Yea blessed Jesus, thou art he *whom thy brethren shall praise, and all thy father's children bow down before thee.* Gen. xlix. 8. Gen. xviii. 22 to the end. Isaiah, ix. 6. Hosea, ii. 16.

3 O LORD, *are* not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, *but* they have refused to receive correction: they have made their

faces harder than a rock, they have refused to return.

4 Therefore I said, Surely these *are* poor, they are foolish: for they know not the way of the LORD, *nor* the judgment of their God.

5 I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them: for they have known the way of the LORD, *and* the judgment of their God: but these have altogether broken the yoke, *and* burst the bonds.

Was there ever a more decisive testimony than what these verses afford, of the universal corruption, ignorance and ruined state of all men, as well rich as poor, and which the fall hath induced in the circumstances of mankind? *All have sinned, and come short of God's glory.* Romans, iii. 19.

6 Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them, *and* a wolf of the evenings shall spoil them, a leopard shall watch over their cities: every one that goeth out thence shall be torn in pieces: because their transgressions are many, *and* their backslidings are increased,

7 ¶ How shall I pardon thee for this? thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by *them that are* no gods: when I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses.

8 They are *as* fed horses in the morning: every one neighed after his neighbour's wife.

9 Shall I not visit for these *things*? saith the LORD; and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

How striking the expostulation? How unanswerably just the appeal? Do not fail to observe, Reader, that the Lord doth not simply speak of one nation, or of another, but it is *this* nation, *this* people, *this* very seed; Israel, the Lord's Israel. And do not the words come in with peculiar, yea personal direction, to our Israel, in the present hour? Did they ever suit the Church, since the days of Jeremiah, more pointedly than now?

10 ¶ Go ye up upon her walls, and destroy, but make not a full end: take away her battlements, for they *are* not the LORD'S.

11 For the house of Israel, and the house of Judah have dealt very treacherously against me, saith the LORD.

12 They have belied the LORD, and said, *It is not he, neither shall evil come upon us, neither shall we see sword nor famine.*

13 And the prophets shall become wind, and the word *is* not in them : thus shall it be done unto them.

Mark Reader, I pray you, in those days as now, how the Lord mingles compassion with punishment. *Destroy*, saith the Lord : but make not a *full end*. *There is a blessing in it.* Isaiah, lxxv. 8. Oh ! how sweet to consider, to what cause the salvation was then, as now, referred.

14 Wherefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.

15 Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the LORD : *it is* a mighty nation, *it is* an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say.

16 Their quiver *is* as an open sepulchre, they *are* all mighty men.

17 And they shall eat up thine harvest, and thy bread, *which* thy sons and thy daughters should eat : they shall eat up thy flocks and thine herds : they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig trees ; they shall impoverish thy fenced cities, wherein thou trustedst, with the sword.

18 Nevertheless in those days, saith the LORD, I will not make a full end with you.

19 ¶ And it shall come to pass when ye shall say, Wherefore doeth the LORD our God all these *things* unto us ? then shalt thou answer them, Like as ye have forsaken me, and served strange gods in your land ; so shall ye serve strangers in a land *that is* not yours.

Reader! do as the Psalmist did, after reading these verses, and say, *I will sing of mercy and judgment.* And let your song as his was, be dedicated to the Lord: for to the Lord alone the praise and glory is due. Psalm ci. 1. And do not overlook the sweet *nevertheless* the Lord puts in. Yes: there is this blessed *nevertheless* in the Covenant. In Jesus his people are pardoned, though as Jesus's children, justly corrected for their sins. The Lord hereby proclaims his holiness, and his utter displeasure against sin, while sparing the sinner. Psalm lxxxix. 30—35.

20 Declare this in the house of Jacob, and publish it in Judah, saying,

21 Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding, which have eyes and see not, which have ears, and hear not:

22 Fear ye not me? saith the LORD: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand *for* the bound of the sea, by a perpetual decree that it cannot pass it; and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?

23 But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart: they are revolted and gone.

24 Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the LORD our God that giveth rain, both the former and the latter in his season; he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest.

Reader! observe how graciously the Lord goeth on to expostulate, and to reason with his people. Both Israel and Judah shall hear. And by what strong appeals from his omnipotency, he calls them to consideration. But alas! until the Lord that calls, gives the grace, to hear, all preaching is in vain. What the Lord hath here said of the sea, and the waves, and the appointed weeks of harvest, is in reference to his Covenant after the flood: to which we of the present hour, can set our seal, as well as those in the days of Jeremiah, Gen. viii. 22.

25 ¶ Your iniquities have turned away these *things*, and your sins have withholden good *things* from you.

26 For among my people are found wicked *men*: they lay wait as he that setteth snares, they set a trap, they catch men.

27 As a cage is full of birds, so *are* their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich.

28 They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper: and the right of the needy do they not judge.

29 Shall I not visit for these *things*? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

The complaint in those verses ends with the same solemn and just enquiry, as we had before. I have often thought, and I see no reason to alter the sentiment, that never was there a scripture more suited to the present times than this; and never was there any period of the Church more parallel than the days of Jeremiah, to the opening of the nineteenth century. In numberless events going on, we may hear a voice of grace, accompanying seasons of exercise, the Lord making as it were this enquiry. Another Prophet is found addressing the Church much in the same way. Hosea, xi. 7, 8, 9.

30 ¶ A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land.

31 The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and my people love to *have it* so: and what will ye do in the end thereof.

Pause Reader over this horrible thing, as it was found in the days of Jeremiah: and then ask, if the annals of the Church's history, hath ever heard or seen the like. Are there any Prophets or preachers prophesying falsely now, in holding up the merit of good works, and speaking peace, when there is no peace, to unawakened, unregenerated sinners? Are there any such to be found, who rule in the minds of men by such false allurements to ruin; and are cherished by them to their hurt? And are those doctrines false and ruinous as they are, yet so delightful to their minds, that they love them, and would hate every one that would attempt to undeceive them?—Let these points be considered as they ought. And if things are found to be so, as that they are in numberless instances: how pointed and unanswerable is the question that closeth all: *what will ye do in the end thereof*? What can all such do, but lay down in sorrow. From all false guides, and errors, and delusions, which tend to fill the mind with vanity, and hide Christ from the soul; *good Lord deliver us!* Isaiah, i. 11.

REFLECTIONS.

My soul! seek and take relief from the sad relation of things in this Chapter, in what it holds forth of the general, yea, universal corruption of men and things both of prophet, priest, and people: in the view of Him, who is indeed the Holy One, the Lord our righteousness. Behold! thy God and Father hath said, that if a man can be found that seeketh the truth and executeth judgment the Lord will pardon the iniquity of his people. Go then my soul, go to thy God and Father in Christ Jesus, and tell him that Jehovah himself first found Him, and thou hast found One also, who is holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens! Tell him (for thy God and Father loveth to hear of Him and his dear name) that he is all this and more, and not only so in himself, but so to all his people. Then plead both Jesus's righteousness, blood, and sacrifice, as the sure means of thy acceptance, and the Father's own authority in appointing the same: and this will be to find pardon, mercy, and peace, in the rich salvation by Jesus Christ. Oh! the blessedness of being found in him, who is one with us, and who was made *sin and a curse for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

And while my soul thou findest relief from the sins and trespasses, both within thee and without thee, in such views of the Lord Jesus; see to it, that thou art humbled to the dust, under a sense of the crying sins of Zion all around thee. Surely, never did Zion lay lower, than in the present hour! Never was Zion in more desolate and languishing circumstances! Oh! that the Lord would take to himself his own great name and power, and go forth, as *a mighty man, and stir up jealousy like a man of war.* Precious Jesus! the cause is thine, the work is thine, and the glory thine. Oh! then, go forth conquering and to conquer, and turn *the hearts of the father's to the children, and the children to the father's:* yea, let all the people praise thee, O Lord, that thou mayest never visit in indignation, nor take vengeance of *such a nation as this.* Amen.

CHAP. VI.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter is as the former, and but a continuation of the same sermon. It contains the Lord's expostulation with his people for their sins and transgressions.

O YE children of Benjamin, gather yourselves to flee out of the midst of Jerusalem, and blow the trumpet in Tekoa: and set up a sign of fire in Beth-haccerem: for evil appeareth out of the north, and great destruction.

There is somewhat particular, and worth notice in this personal direction to *Benjamin.* Distinguishing mercies are sweet mercies. *Beth-haccerem* means *the house of vineyards.* The Church is called *a vineyard of red wine.* Isaiah, xxvii. 1, 2. I do not say as much,

but I would humbly ask, may not the expression without violence be supposed to refer to Christ as the defence?

2 I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate *woman*.

3 The shepherds with their flocks shall come unto her: they shall pitch *their* tents against her round about: they shall feed every one in his place.

4 Prepare ye war against her: arise and let us go up at noon: woe unto us, for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out.

5 Arise, and let us go by night, and let us destroy her palaces.

6 ¶ For thus hath the LORD of hosts said, Hew ye down trees, and cast a mount against Jerusalem: *this is* the city to be visited, *she is* wholly oppression in the midst of her.

7 As a fountain casteth out her waters, so she casteth out her wickedness: violence and spoil is heard in her, before me continually *is* grief and wounds.

8 Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee: lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited.

9 ¶ Thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall thoroughly glean the remnant of Israel as a vine; turn back thine hand as a grape-gatherer into the baskets.

I venture to think, that if we read these verses with an eye to the Church in Jesus, they will be found very interesting. Who is the speaker here, that likens Zion to a comely and delicate woman? May it not be Jesus? And doth not Jesus frequently do so? See Song, i. 8—15. Song, ii. 2. Ezek. xvi. 14. The afflictions and exercises, which are threatened, are all suited to the Church. Hosea, ii. throughout.

10 To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear *is* uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the

word of the LORD is unto them a reproach : they have no delight in it.

11 Therefore I am full of the fury of the LORD : I am weary with holding in : I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of young men together : for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged with *him that is full of days*.

12 And their houses shall be turned unto others, *with their fields and wives together* : for I will stretch out my hand upon the inhabitants of the land, saith the LORD.

13 For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them, every one *is given to covetousness* ; and from the prophets even unto the priest, every one dealeth falsely.

14 They have healed also the hurt *of the daughter of my people slightly*, saying, Peace, peace, when *there is no peace*.

15 Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination ? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush : therefore they shall fall among them that fall : at the time *that I visit them*, they shall be cast down, saith the LORD.

All these are so many gracious expostulations suited to the state of the Church, in all her seasons of affliction. I need not enlarge on them. They express that deadness, that leanness of soul, that bondage, and indifference to ordinance ; the children of God, are at times but too well acquainted with. See Song, v. 2, 3. Rev. iii. 2.

16 Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where *is the good way*, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls : but they said, We will not walk *therein*.

This is a beautiful verse, read with an eye to Christ : who is both *the new and the living way* ; and also the *old path* to dwell in, being *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*. *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever*. And who but Jesus is the rest of the soul ? See all those scriptures. John, xiv. 6. Rev. xiii. 8. Heb. xiii. 8. Matt. xi. 28, 29, 30. Isaiah, xxviii. 12. Psalm cxvi. 7.

17 Also I set watchmen over you, *saying*; Harken to the sound of the trumpet: but they said, We will not hearken.

18 ¶ Therefore hear, ye nations, and know, O congregation, what *is* among them.

19 Hear, O earth, behold, I will bring evil upon this people, *even* the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.

20 To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba? and the sweet cane from a far country? your burnt-offerings *are* not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me.

21 Therefore, thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will lay stumbling-blocks before this people, and the fathers and the sons together shall fall upon them: the neighbour and his friend shall perish.

In what strong terms doth the Lord set forth the folly of outward things, as the incense and the cane, when there was no inward offering of the heart. What are all acts of religion, when there is no regeneration? Isaiah, i. 11—17.

22 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, a people cometh from the north country, and a great nation shall be raised from the sides of the earth.

23 They shall lay hold on bow and spear: they *are* cruel, and have no mercy: their voice roareth like the sea, and they ride upon horses set in array as men for war against thee, O daughter of Zion.

24 We have heard the fame thereof: our hands wax feeble: anguish hath taken hold of us, *and* pain, as of a woman in travail.

25 Go not forth into the field, nor walk by the way; for the sword of the enemy, *and* fear *is* on every side.

26 ¶ O daughter of my people, gird *thee* with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes: make thee mourning, *as for* an only son, most bitter la-

mentation: for the spoiler shall suddenly come upon us.

27 I have set thee *for* a tower, *and* a fortress among my people, that thou mayest know and try their way.

28 They *are* all grievous revolvers, walking with slanders: *they are* brass and iron, they are all corrupters.

29 The bellows are burnt, the lead is consumed of the fire, the founder melteth in vain; for the wicked are not plucked away.

30 Reprobate silver shall *men* call them, because the LORD hath rejected them.

The last of these verses throws a light on the whole passage, by way of explanation, on the principles of the gospel of Christ. All men are as reprobate silver, until the Great Refiner and Purifier of silver hath brought them through the furnace of his regenerating and renewing Spirit. All in themselves are for ever rejected, until chosen and accepted in Jesus. Ephes. i. 4—7.

REFLECTIONS.

LORD Jesus! look upon thy Church, thy vineyard, thy Benjamin, beloved: and place her in times of danger, in the *Beth-haccerem* of safety in thyself. Remember thou dear Lord, what thou hast said, and what thou hast promised, and say still: *I the Lord do keep her. I will water her every moment, lest any hurt her. I will keep her night and day.*

And surely thou blessed Lord! if thou hast likened thy Church to a comely and delicate woman: it must be so from being comely in thine eyes, from the comeliness thou hast put upon her. Precious Lord Jesus! though I am in myself black, yea, full of spots; but if comely in thine eyes, it is thy robe of righteousness hath made me so. Oh! for grace to eye thee, and love thee, and to be living upon thee, and to thee as the Lord my righteousness!

Do thou, Almighty Refiner and Purifier of thy Church and people: sit by me as my Refiner, that men may no longer call me reprobate silver, when thou hast refined me as silver is refined, and tried me as gold is tried. Oh! Lord God! by the fire of thy blessed Spirit, consuming all the dross of my corrupt affections, and with thy special influences refining and purging away all the scum of a nature foul and spotted, do thou so cleanse me for thyself and thy glory, that I may offer to my Lord an offering in righteousness, and be so purified like the sons of Levi, to be among thy priests, in thy salvation for ever!

CHAP. VII.

CONTENTS.

Here seems to be the opening of a new Sermon of the Prophet's: but the same subject. The Prophet reproves Judah, and admonisheth to return to the Lord.

THE word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

2 Stand in the gate of the LORD's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD all *ye of* Judah, that enter in at these gates, to worship the LORD.

3 Thus saith the LORD of hosts the God of Israel, Amend your ways, and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.

4 Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD *are* these.

5 For if ye thoroughly amend your ways, and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour;

6 *If* ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods, to your hurt.

7 Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.

It appears by the subject of the Prophet's sermon, that the men of Judah, while destitute of vital godliness, were much taken up with the form of it: and though without the love of God in their heart, prided themselves in belonging to the temple of the Lord. Reader! they did that which men of no religion have in all ages been much disposed to do, satisfied themselves with the outside forms of religion. And this the Lord calls *lying words*. What an awful delusion! To be fancying ourselves something, when in reality we are nothing. Such the Lord Jesus hath described concerning the Church of *Laodicea*. Happy would it have been had this spirit of delusion died with the departure of the *Laodiceans*! See Rev. iii. 14—17.

8 ¶ Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit.

9 Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal; and walk after other gods, whom ye know not;

10 And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?

11 Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? behold, even I have seen *it*, saith the LORD.

12 But go ye now unto my place which *was* in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it, for the wickedness of my people Israel.

13 And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early, and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not;

14 Therefore will I do unto *this* house which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you, and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh.

15 And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, *even* the whole seed of Ephraim.

From what is said in these verses of men talking as if delivered to do evil, it should seem, that there were in the Prophet's days, as well as in ours, persons who took occasion from the doctrine of free grace, to contend for the heresy of fatality: and by reducing men to the character of mere machines, would do away all the consequences of evil. But as this is levelled against the sovereignty of God, so is it refuted by the word of God. All men are by nature disposed since the fall, not delivered, but disposed to evil: and grace only it is that makes the whole difference between one man and another. To tell God therefore, in justification or apology for ourselves, that we are delivered to do evil, is to charge God foolishly, and to make him the Author of our sins. The Lord in a fine strain, most plainly and fully refutes it. Is my house, are my ordinances, or my word, are these things ministers to this purpose? Nay, do you not remember, how little respect was had to place, or person, that *even Shiloh*, I forsook, and retired from it, in consequence of the corruptions of the people, in times of worship. See I Sam. iv. 4—11. Reader! think how truly deplorable that state must be, which is trusting to a name to live, while virtually dead before God?

16 Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me, for I will not hear thee.

17 ¶ Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem?

18 The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead *their* dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.

19 Do they provoke me to anger; saith the LORD: *do they* not *provoke* themselves to the confusion of their own faces?

Here is a very solemn scripture indeed, in which the Lord forbids his servant *even* to pray for the people. And there is another solemn scripture suitable to be read together, Ezek xvi. 42. When the Lord commands his faithful servant not to pray for sinners; and when the Lord ceaseth to correct, punishment is not far off. Lord keep us from these sore judgments!

20 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched.

21 ¶ Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Put your burnt-offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh.

22 For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings, or sacrifices.

23 But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.

24 But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels, *and* in the imagi-

nation of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.

25 Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day, I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early, and sending *them*.

26 Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck, they did worse than their fathers.

27 Therefore thou shalt speak all these words unto them, but they will not hearken to thee: thou shalt also call unto them, but they will not answer thee.

28 But thou shalt say unto them, *This is* a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished and is cut off from their mouth.

29 ¶ Cut off thine hair, *O Jerusalem*, and cast *it* away, and take up a lamentation on high places; for the LORD hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath.

30 For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the LORD: they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it.

I pause, not to interrupt the Reader in the progress of these verses, they are all to the same amount as the former. How pathetically the Prophet mourns the obstinacy of his people! Surely ministers ought to have tender feelings of compassion for the state of sinners.

31 And they have built the high places of Tophet, which *is* in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I commanded *them* not, neither came it into my heart.

32 ¶ Therefore behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter: for they shall bury in Tophet, till there be no place.

33 And the carcases of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth, and none shall fray *them* away.

34 Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride: for the land shall be desolate.

Tophet had been a remarkable place on several occasions. It was called *Tophet* because it had been a place of slaughter. And it had been a charnel house, or sepulchre for burying in; and also a place of sacrifice. See Joshua, xv. 8. 2 Kings, xxiii. 10. Isaiah, xxx. 33. Psalm lxxviii. 60. The close of the Chapter is very affecting. There can be no cause for spiritual joy where the voice of the Bridegroom is not heard in his Church. His absence makes a gloom, let the surrounding circumstances otherwise be what they may.

REFLECTIONS.

I PASS by every other consideration in this Chapter (though there are many which would be highly profitable to regard) to attend to one, yet more eminently striking, suggested in meeting that wonderful word, *Shiloh*, which I never meet with in the holy volume, without having my whole soul led to the contemplation of Him from whom it is derived. Yea! blessed Jesus! when I consider thee as the *Shiloh*, the *Deliverer*, the *Saviour* of thy people; thou art increasingly dear, and increasingly precious, to be beheld, and in these seasons more especially, when thy immense value becomes more striking, from the view of profligacy and corruption all around. And though places, or persons, derive no sanctity, unless from thee, yet the *Shiloh* will be for ever the blessedness of his redeemed, and their portion for ever.

While I meet with this glorious and distinguishing name, *Shiloh*, but once in the whole book of God, when spoken of a Person, and that Person Christ, and this in the prophetic language of the dying patriarch Jacob: yet when found elsewhere, and connected with it, the recollection of Him in his glorious character, as the *Shiloh*; surely it makes the heart of the believer glad, and fills the soul with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. Let me never hear of *Shiloh*, or read of *Shiloh* without holy joy. Jesus will be the *Shiloh*, to gather all his redeemed unto himself, that *where he is, there they shall be also*. And what though *Tophet* is ordained of old, and his believers must pass through a valley of humiliation, more than that of the son of *Hinnom*: yet Jesus will be with them. *Shiloh* will bring them *through*, and bring them *out*; and bring them *in*, to his everlasting kingdom. Hail thou glorious *Shiloh*! to thee, shall the *gathering of the people be!*

CHAP. VIII.

CONTENTS.

The Prophet is going on with the same Sermon, in the same strain, and on the same subject. The Chapter is made up of reproof and lamentation.

AT that time, saith the LORD, they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of his princes, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem out of their graves.

2 And they shall spread them before the sun, and the moon, and all the host of heaven, whom they have loved, and whom they have served, and after whom they have walked, and whom they have sought, and whom they have worshipped: they shall not be gathered, nor be buried, they shall be for dung upon the face of the earth.

3 And death shall be chosen rather than life, by all the residue of them that remain of this evil family, which remain in all the places whither I have driven them, saith the LORD of hosts.

It is more than probable, that the ransacking of the sepulchres of the kings of Israel and Judah by the enemy, was more in their view to find treasure, than to shew contempt. David's grave we are told by an ancient historian, *Hicarnus*, had three thousand talents of gold and silver in it. But what designs soever the enemy had; the Lord's over-ruling it, was for punishment. What could have been more humbling, or more distressing! And indeed we are told the effect wrought by it, was dreadful? so that death rather than life, became the wish of the people. Reader! let us learn from it, how awful it must be, to have God for our enemy? When he permits the enemy to govern; alas! how truly tyrannical they govern!

4 ¶ Moreover, thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD, Shall they fall, and not arise? shall he turn away and not return.

5 Why *then* is this people of Jerusalem slidden back, by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return.

6 I hearkened and heard, *but* they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness,

saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle.

7 Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times, and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming, but my people know not the judgment of the LORD.

Was there ever a more beautiful figure chosen to depict the extreme folly of the human understanding, than in the contrast here drawn between the inconsiderateness of man, and the thoughtfulness of the birds of passage. How stated, how regular, how constant, to the season of emigration, are those fowls of the heavens? But poor fallen senseless man, never of himself seeketh the change of climate from the perishing things of time and sense, to the everlasting love and mercy in Christ Jesus!

8 How do ye say, We *are* wise, and the law of the LORD *is* with us? Lo, certainly in vain made he *it*, the pen of the scribes *is* in vain.

9 The wise *men* are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken; lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD, and what wisdom *is* in them?

10 Therefore will I give their wives unto others, and their fields to them that shall inherit *them*: for every one from the least even unto the greatest is given to covetousness, from the prophet even unto the priest, every one dealeth falsely.

11 For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when *there is* no peace.

12 Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall, in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the LORD.

13 ¶ I will surely consume them, saith the LORD; *there shall be* no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree, and the leaf shall fade, and *the things* that I have given them, shall pass away from them.

14 Why do we sit still? assemble yourselves, and let us enter into the defenced cities, and let us be silent there: for the LORD our God hath put us to silence, and given us water of gall to drink, because we have sinned against the LORD.

15 We looked for peace, but no good *came*: and for a time of health, and behold trouble.

16 The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan: the whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of his strong ones, for they are come, and have devoured the land, and all that is in it, the city, and those that dwell therein.

17 For behold, I will send serpents, cockatrices among you, which *will not be* charmed, and they shall bite you, saith the LORD.

18 ¶ *When* I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart *is* faint in me.

19 Behold, the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people, because of them that dwell in a far country: *Is* not the LORD in Zion? *is* not her king in her? why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities?

20 The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

21 For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt, I am black: astonishment hath taken hold on me.

22 *Is there* no balm in Gilead? *is there* no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

I bring the whole of this beautiful Chapter, from this verse to the end into one view, for the sake of shortness, and from necessity; but otherwise nothing could be more desirable than to dwell upon each verse. Taken in one mass, it contains the gracious expostulation of the Lord, with his people: blessed as they were, with every means, but destitute of the desired end. And how beautiful the Chapter closeth. *Gilead*, was a place remarkable in the land for loveliness, and for health and fertility (see Jeremiah xxii. 6.) and therefore the question becomes the more striking, as it was intended:

Is there no balm in Gilead: no Physician there? Reader! spiritualize the passage, and the beauty of it will still be more blessed. There is balm in Gilead, and there is a Physician there. For Jesus's blood and righteousness is an everlasting, never failing balm: and Jesus himself is there an Almighty, All-present, and All-sufficient Physician, whereby all the diseased in our nature may have in him an healing. If it be asked, why then are we not recovered? Jesus himself answereth; ye will not come to me that ye might have life. John, v. 40. Here is the cause. The evil is in man, not in God. Sinners reject the counsel of God against their own souls, and refuse to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely!

REFLECTIONS.

BEHOLD my soul, from the perusal of this Chapter, what a poor, ignorant, unthinking, and improvident creature is man! The birds of the air, and the beasts of the field, do, by instinct, what man by reason, now in his fallen state doth not do. If the winter approacheth, the swallow seeks a warmer climate. If a storm falls, the cattle flee to the barn, or to the hedge for shelter. But neither the winter of life, nor the storm of threatened judgments, prevail upon the sinner, void of grace, *to flee from the wrath to come.*

But is not the Lord in Zion? Is not her King in her? Shall there be balm in Gilead, and yet no remedy be applied? Shall Jesus indeed, the great Physician be there; and the health of his redeemed not be recovered? Oh! let thy name, thou dear Lord, be as ointment poured forth, that by the quickening and regenerating influences of thy blessed Spirits, such views of our misery, by reason of the fall, may open before us, and such a sense of thy suitability to all our wants may appear, and become desirable; that apprehending thee by faith, in thy Person, work, and offices, and in all thy relations, righteousness, and grace, our souls may find a recovery. Speak blessed Lord to my heart, to my conscience; and while thou speakest, in the same tender words as of old, to the diseased; *wilt thou be made whole?* Oh! give me grace and faith, in lively exercise, to answer and to believe, and to depend upon thy sovereign power to heal. Oh! let me know thee by that precious name, JEHOVAH ROPHE! And let me hear thy gracious voice as to Israel, saying, *I am the LORD that healeth thee!* Amen.

CHAP. IX.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter opens with the cry of the Prophet over the sins and calamities of the people. Jeremiah having poured out his soul upon this occasion, and wept before the throne, prosecutes his Sermon, in calling upon the people to hear the Lord's decrees concerning them.

OH that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!

2 Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of way-faring men, that I might leave my people, and go from them: for they *be* all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men.

3 And they bend their tongues *like* their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the LORD.

4 Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders.

5 And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, *and* weary themselves to commit iniquity.

6 Thine habitation *is* in the midst of deceit, through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the LORD.

How blessed is it to behold faithful ministers, who enter into a deep concern for their people. What a beautiful portrait is here undesignedly drawn of Jeremiah. How endeared is that servant of the Lord, or ought to be, who takes part in all that concerns Zion. But Reader! while looking at the servant, let us not overlook the Master. Yea, blessed Jesus! doth not my meditation take wing and behold thee in thine unequalled sorrow over Jerusalem? Luke, xiii. 34.

7 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, I will melt them, and try them; for how shall I do for the daughter of my people?

I read this verse alone, in order that we may not lose the beauty and the blessedness of it. What a delightful representation is here made of the Lord's pity for his people? Doth it not seem as if the Lord was looking round for a way for them, and waiting to be gracious? He appears as if he said, *How shall I give thee up?* Isaiah, xxx. 18. Hosea, xi. 8, 9.

8 Their tongue *is as* an arrow shot out, it speaketh deceit: *one* speaketh peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth, but in heart he layeth his wait.

9 ¶ Shall I not visit them for these *things?* saith

the LORD, shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

10 For the mountains will I take up a weeping and wailing, and for the habitations of the wilderness a lamentation, because they are burnt up, so that none can pass through *them*, neither can *men* hear the voice of the cattle, both the fowl of the heavens, and the beast are fled, they are gone.

11 And I will make Jerusalem heaps, *and* a den of dragons, and I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant.

12 ¶ Who *is* the wise man that may understand this, and *who is he* to whom the mouth of the LORD hath spoken, that he may declare it, for what the land perisheth, *and* is burnt up like a wilderness, that none passeth through?

13 And the LORD saith, Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein;

14 But have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them :

15 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will feed them, *even* this people with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink.

16 I will scatter them also among the heathen, whom neither they nor their fathers have known; and I will send a sword after them, till I have consumed them.

It is blessed to remark, that in all the Lord's chastisements, he hath one uniform object in view for their reform. All his dispensations are to bring his people back to himself. Hence the wise among them are called upon to consider: and the wormwood and gall given them are, that from the bitterness they find in the effects of sin, they may be brought to recollect the sweet dispensations of the Lord, Hosea, ii. 6, 7. Luke, xv. 14—19.

17 ¶ Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Consider ye, and call for the mourning women, that they

may come, and send for cunning *women*, that they may come.

18 And let them make haste, and take up a wailing for us, that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eye lids gush out with waters.

19 For a voice of wailing is heard out of Zion. How are we spoiled! we are greatly confounded, because we have forsaken the land, because our dwellings have cast *us* out.

20 Yet hear the word of the LORD, O ye women, and let your ear receive the word of his mouth, and teach your daughters wailing, and every one her neighbour's lamentation.

21 For death is come up into our windows, *and* is entered into our palaces, to cut off the children from without, *and* the young men from the streets.

22 ¶ Speak, Thus saith the LORD, Even the carcasses of men shall fall as dung upon the open field, and as the handful after the harvest-man, and none shall gather *them*.

Perhaps these mourning women means true weepers, and the cunning women those which were counterfeit. And the counterfeit would have found cause to change their cries into real sorrow, had they foreseen the greatness of the calamities coming upon them. Death entering into the windows, became an affliction, light, and patiently to be borne, as it related to the present life, compared to what the Prophet described, of the miseries at the siege, and in the captivity. See Lament. iv. throughout.

23 ¶ Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches :

24 But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I *am* the LORD, which exerciseth loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth : for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD.

These precious verses seem to come in like a parenthesis : and yet not to be used with a parenthesis, being so precious, in the midst of a gloomy description of a degenerate and rebellious people. The

blessed truths they contain can need no comment. Jesus is both the wisdom of God, and the power of God, and the riches of God. And in the knowledge and understanding of Him, there is enough to glory. And we are sure, that God the Father glorieth, and taketh delight in the glory of his dear Son. Matt. iii. 17.

25 ¶ Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will punish all *them which are circumcised with the uncircumcised* ;

26 Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all *that are in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness : for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart.*

It is blessed to see the Old Testament truths corresponding with New Testament doctrines. Both the circumcised and the uncircumcised are all one in Christ Jesus. And without him, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, availeth any thing. Gal. vi. 15. Gal. iii. 26 to the end.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! look at the Prophet in his tender concern for Israel! Look at the Lord God of the Prophets in his unparalleled compassion over our nature, and then ask, what must be the hardened state of the human heart, in the contemplation of the sins and sorrows of life, unmoved and unconcerned? Oh! who that beholds the vast domain of Satan's empire, but must cry out, *oh! that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears!* Precious Lord Jesus! though my habitation is in the midst of deceit, and I am constrained to dwell in the midst of *Kedar*, yet Lord, do thou melt my soul, and try me, and in thy faithfulness, cause me to be found faithful!

Where shall I find relief in such views of the general, yea the universal, depravity of human nature, but in thee, who art the Lord my righteousness? Thou art indeed the wisdom, the power, the grace, the goodness of God, and art made so to all thy people, Henceforth, Lord! grant that I may never glory but in thee. Thou wilt be wisdom to me, for in thee are hid *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge!* Thou art my might, for thou art *my light, and the strength of my life, and my portion for ever.* And thou art riches, yea *durable riches and righteousness.* And all these art thou made of God to thy people, *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.* Never then blessed Jesus may I henceforth glory but in thee, the Lord my God.

CHAP. X.

CONTENTS.

In order to reprove the folly of idolatry, the Prophet is in his Chapter drawing a statement between the glory of Jehovah and the shame of idols. The Chapter concludes with some observations on the ill conduct of foolish pastors.

HEAR ye the word which the LORD speaketh unto you, O house of Israel.

2 Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven, for the heathen are dismayed at them.

3 For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest (the work of the hands of the workman) with the axe.

4 They deck it with silver and with gold, they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not.

5 They *are* upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go: be not afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, neither also *is it* in them to do good.

6 Forasmuch as *there is* none like unto thee, O LORD, thou *art* great, and thy name *is* great in might.

7 Who would not fear thee, O king of nations? for to thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as among all the wise *men* of the nations, and in all their kingdoms *there is* none like unto thee.

8 But they are altogether brutish, and foolish; the stock is a doctrine of vanities.

9 Silver spread into plates is brought from Tarshish, and gold from Uphaz, the work of the workman, and of the hands of the founder: blue and purple *is* their cloathing: they *are* all the work of cunning *men*.

10 But the LORD *is* the true God, he *is* the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath

the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation.

11 Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, *even* they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.

12 He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.

13 When he uttereth his voice, *there is* a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth: he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures.

14 Every man is brutish in *his* knowledge: every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image *is* falsehood, and *there is* no breath in them.

15 They *are* vanity, *and* the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish.

16 The portion of Jacob *is* not like them: for he *is* the former of all *things*, and Israel *is* the rod of his inheritance; the LORD of hosts is his name.

This is a most striking sermon, and very highly finished, in which the Prophet, in the Lord's name, asserts his divine nature and sovereignty: and then displays the folly of idols. The words are so plain, that they can need no comment. *Isaiah* had it in commission, to preach to the same amount: and he hath done it in the most sublime manner. *Isaiah*, xlv. 9—21. And let the Reader observe in the close of this paragraph, how sweetly the Lord speaks of the Israel of God: as the Lord's portion and the lot of his inheritance. The Reader will find a parallel passage *Deut.* xxxii. 8, &c. and again, *Deut.* xxxiii. 26 to the end.

17 ¶ Gather up thy wares out of the land, O inhabitant of the fortress.

18 For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will sling out the inhabitants of the land at this once, and will distress them, that they may find *it so*.

19 ¶ Woe is me for my hurt, my wound is

grievous: but I said, Truly this *is* a grief, and I must bear it.

20 My tabernacle is spoiled, and all my cords are broken: my children are gone forth of me, and they *are* not; *there is* none to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains.

21 For the pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the LORD: therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered.

22 Behold, the noise of the bruit is come, and a great commotion out of the north-country, to make the cities of Judah desolate, *and* a den of dragons.

23 ¶ O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh, to direct his steps.

24 O LORD, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.

25 Pour out thy fury upon the heathen, that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name: for they have eaten up Jacob, and devoured him, and consumed him, and have made his habitation desolate.

The Prophet gets back again to his old subject. The prospect of the Babylonish captivity so affected the Prophet's heart, that he could harp upon no other string. And observe, how the man of God gives vent to his full heart of sorrow in prayer. Reader! it is the only relief this, to a soul whose *sighing cometh before he eateth*. Where shall the afflicted find consolation but at a mercy-seat? Into whose bosom shall an overcharged mind pour its contents, but into that of Jesus? Lord help me in such moments, to say and do, with one of old; *when my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I*. Psalm lxi. 2.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let you and I not fail to gather improvement from such views as these scriptures afford of the low and abject state to which men are reduced by the fall. Did not the word of God prove it, surely it would be incredible, that any persons, much less nations, should be guilty of idolatry. There seemeth no temptation to the thing itself. Moreover reason revolts at it. And yet, as if to shew the horrible state into which our nature is sunk, all men are by nature

idolaters, if not to images, at least to sin and Satan; to divers lusts and pleasures, and in short, to any thing, and to every thing; which is made a rival with God, for the obtaining the rein of our ruling passion. Lord! undertake for us, and though other lords beside thee have had dominion over us, yet henceforth may we make mention only of thy name.

Under such circumstances of evil every where around; and conscious, as this Chapter most strikingly sets it forth, that the way of man is not in himself; neither in men that walketh to direct his steps; let mine eyes Lord be unto thee! Be thou the source and fountain; the first cause and final end, of all my hopes and views; my expectations and joys, then shall I be sure to be kept from idols, and to be distinguished from all the worshippers of them around, who call not upon thy name, and know thee not. Precious Jesus, thou art indeed my life, both natural, spiritual, and eternal. Maintain Lord in me, the life thou hast begun. Carry it on, refresh it, strengthen it, under languishings: revive it under sharp and trying dispensations. Be thou thyself the source and spring; the Author and the finisher; the everlasting object and delight; the cause for whom, and the effect *in* whom, all is made perfect. Yea Lord, be thou *the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.* Amen.

CHAP. XI.

CONTENTS.

The Prophet is prosecuting the same important, but unthankful office of reproof, through this Chapter. The close of it discovers a conspiracy formed against Jeremiah, by the men of Anathoth.

THE word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

2 Hear ye the words of this covenant, and speak unto the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem,

3 And say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Cursed *be* the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant,

4 Which I commanded your fathers in the day *that* I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I command you: so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God:

5 That I may perform the oath which I have sworn unto your fathers, to give them a land

flowing with milk and honey, as *it is* this day. Then answered I, and said, So be it, O LORD.

The Prophet produceth very frequently his commission from the Lord, by way both of establishing his authority, and enforcing their attention. The subject here is to remind Israel of God's covenant, and their breach of it. And the Prophet's Amen at the close of it becomes a confirmation, and his hearty good will towards it. Reader! do not fail to remark, how pleased the Lord is with his covenant: and how in many parts of his holy word, he takes delight in bringing it forward. Neither forget, to whom that covenant referred, and in whom it had its completion. Isaiah, xlii. 6, 7.

6 Then the LORD said unto me, Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them.

7 For I earnestly protested unto your fathers, in the day *that* I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, *even* unto this day, rising early, and protesting, saying, Obey my voice.

8 Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but walked every one in the imagination of their evil heart: therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded *them* to do, but they did *them* not.

It should seem, that the Prophet was here sent into the streets to preach, as perhaps before he had been in the assembly.

9 And the LORD said unto me, A conspiracy is found among the men of Judah, and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

10 They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them: the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant, which I made with their fathers.

11 ¶ Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them.

12 Then shall the cities of Judah, and inha-

bitants of Jerusalem go, and cry unto the gods unto whom they offer incense; but they shall not save them at all in the time of their trouble.

13 For *according* to the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah; and *according* to the number of the streets of Jerusalem, have ye set up altars to *that* shameful thing, *even* altars to burn incense unto Baal.

Was there ever a more pitiable view of degeneracy, than Judah here affords? Was this the great and understanding people, that was once the astonishment and envy of the whole earth? What? had they indeed a dunghill god, for every city? How is the most fine gold become dim?

14 Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear *them* in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble.

We have here a renewed command to restrain prayer. An awful precept, chap. vii. 16.

15 What hath my beloved to do in mine house, *seeing* she hath wrought lewdness with many? and the holy flesh is passed from thee: when thou doest evil, then thou rejoicest.

16 The LORD called thy name, A green olive-tree, fair, *and* of goodly fruit: with the noise of a great tumult he hath kindled fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken.

17 For the LORD of hosts that planted thee, hath pronounced evil against thee, for the evil of the house of Israel, and of the house of Judah, which they have done against themselves, to provoke me to anger in offering incense unto Baal.

Amidst all these solemn things, and amidst all the judgments coming upon the people; let not the Reader overlook how the Lord graciously adverts to former times, and still calls his Church *beloved*. I do not presume to determine, what is meant by *the holy flesh*, passing from the people. But I cannot conclude, that it means only the holy flesh of the sacrifice. Yet if it did; still that sacrifice was typical of somewhat higher. And who is this but Christ? But what is meant then by the holy flesh passing from the Church! I humbly conceive; not that Jesus is passed away from his Church; but his Church hath passed away and lost sight of Him, whom the holy sa-

crifice typified. Is it not blessed under all to consider, that in it *there was as the teil-tree, and as the oak whose substance is in itself.* The holy seed is the substance. *Destroy it not, a blessing is in it,* Isaiah, vi. 13. and Isaiah, lxxv. 8.

18 ¶ And the LORD hath given me knowledge of it, and I know it, then thou shewedst me their doings.

19 But I *was* like a lamb, or an ox, that is brought to the slaughter, and I knew not that they had devised devices against me, *saying,* Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof, and let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be no more remembered.

20 But, O LORD of hosts, that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them; for unto thee have I revealed my cause.

21 Therefore thus saith the LORD of the men of Anathoth, that seek thy life, saying, Prophecy not in the name of the LORD, that thou die not by our hand:

22 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, I will punish them; the young men shall die by the sword, their sons and their daughters shall die by famine.

23 And there shall be no remnant of them, for I will bring evil upon the men of Anathoth, *even* the year of their visitation.

Poor Jeremiah's preaching brought upon him constant hatred and persecution. It hath done so to all faithful preachers in all ages of the Church, and ever must and will. So Jesus taught his disciples to expect, and so they have always found. John, xv. 18—21. Mark, how the Lord, in the close of the Chapter, sums up the subject, by taking the cause into his own hand. Luke, x. 1—12. Reader! do not overlook a greater than Jeremiah here. Isaiah, liii. 7.

REFLECTIONS.

My soul! call out of this Chapter for thy meditation what the Jerusalem sinners laid so little at heart; the blessedness of that Covenant, the Lord commanded his servant the Prophet to preach in their streets. What can be more sweet, or gracious, than that which is at

the bottom of all mercies, and which Jehovah himself makes so: *I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* Oh! Lord, amidst all my departures and backslidings to this foundation, and in Christ confirmed and made known, may I look and take comfort! My God will hear me!

Oh! ye who like the men of Judah, have been setting up the many idols in your heart; here let your views be directed, and seek in the gracious Covenant promises of God in Christ, deliverance from all your idols. God in Christ is gracious. He will be very merciful at thy cry in Jesus, and when he heareth he will answer. Oh! for grace to lay hold of the Covenant of redemption in his blood!

CHAP. XII.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter contains the humble application to the Lord, in beholding the prosperity of the wicked. Towards the close of the Chapter we have some sweet promises of God to his people.

RIGHTEOUS art thou, O LORD, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously.

2 Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root: they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit; thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins.

3 But thou, O LORD, knowest me; thou hast seen me, and tried mine heart towards thee: pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of slaughter.

If the Reader will turn to Psalm lxxiii., and remark the complaints of *Asaph*, on the same subject, he will find the best comment to what *Jeremiah* here speaks of, in his experience. He will find also the best remedy to it, and which God the Holy Ghost teacheth, in the close of that Psalm. So much indeed is there said on it, and so truly blessed, and unanswerably conclusive, that nothing more can be required. I only pray the Reader to remark with me, that *Jeremiah*, like *Asaph*, begins his observations, with setting it down, as a sure unerring maxim, that however at a loss the people of God might be in explaining the ways of God in his providences: certain it is, that the Lord is righteous, and cannot do wrong.

4 How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? the beasts are consumed,

and the birds, because they said, He shall not see our last end.

5 ¶ If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, *wherein* thou trustedst, *they wearied thee*, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?

6 For even thy brethren, and the house of thy father, even they have dealt treacherously with thee, yea, they have called a multitude after thee; believe them not, though they speak fair words unto thee.

I venture to look far beyond *Jeremiah*, and all his personal troubles, in what is here said. Who indeed, but must eye Jesus, in what is here said of his brethren. John, vii. 3, 4, 5. And with respect to Jesus, what were the swellings of Jordan, and the contention of horses, compared to the billows of divine wrath, which overwhelmed his precious soul, when he made his soul an offering for sin. Psalm xlii. 7. Song, viii. 7. Psalm lxix. 1, 2, 3, &c.

7 ¶ I have forsaken mine house, I have left mine heritage, I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into the hands of her enemies.

8 Mine heritage is unto me as a lion in the forest, it crieth out against me: therefore have I hated it.

9 Mine heritage *is* unto me *as* a speckled bird, the birds round about *are* against her; come ye, assemble all the beasts of the field, come to devour.

10 Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness.

11 They have made it desolate, *and being* desolate, it mourneth unto me; the whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth *it* to heart.

12 The spoilers are come upon all high places through the wilderness: for the sword of the LORD shall devour from the *one* end of the land, even

to the *other* end of the land: no flesh shall have peace.

13 They have sown wheat, but shall reap thorns: they have put themselves to pain, *but* shall not profit: and they shall be ashamed of your revenues, because of the fierce anger of the LORD.

I hope that I do not use any violence to this passage, neither strain the holy scripture, when I say, that after every thing which may be said, in allusion here to Israel, I venture to consider somewhat infinitely higher, and more interesting is intended from it. May we not suppose, that it is the language of God the Father in respect to his dear Son given up into the hands of wicked men, for the purposes of redemption? At all events we know, that the Lord so speaketh, concerning Christ. Isaiah, xlii. 1. John, iii. 16.

14 ¶ Thus saith the LORD against all mine evil neighbours, that touch the inheritance which I have caused my people Israel to inherit, Behold, I will pluck them out of their land, and pluck out the house of Judah from among them.

15 And it shall come to pass after that I have plucked them out, I will return, and have compassion on them, and will bring them again every man to his heritage, and every man to his land.

16 And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, The LORD liveth (as they taught my people to swear by Baal) then shall they be built in the midst of my people.

17 But if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up, and destroy that nation saith the LORD.

I detain not the Reader, with multiplying observations on these verses, the tenor of which is so uniformly discoverable through all the Bible. But I beg of him, to remark with me, how gracious the Lord's promises of salvation are interspersed, in this, as in all other passages of a like nature. We have a beautiful, and indeed a continued specimen of this from beginning to end, in Levit. chap. xxvi. to which I refer.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let us learn from this chapter to form one sure and unerring maxim, concerning the providences of God, that however

puzzling and unaccountable to us they may appear, the issue of them must invariably be, for the divine glory, and for the welfare of his people. Behold in this point of view, our faith will find frequent cause indeed for exercise; but faith will also find a suited strength to lean upon during the time of exercise. Who should have thought the cruelty of Joseph's brethren, would, in the divine direction of it, ultimately be made the means of so much good? Who would have conceived, that the crucifixion of Jesus, was *in the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God?* Such events speak, in a loud voice, to suspend our judgment on all the ways and works of God: and to wait to hear what the Lord will accomplish by all his providences going on throughout the earth.

Reader! let us learn another sweet lesson from the perusal of this Chapter. I mean, that we study more, in silent and humble adoration, the ways and works of the Lord, both in the circumstances of our own lives, and the order of his Church. Jesus hath the government upon his shoulder. He is the King of nations, as well as King of Saints. *His way is in the sea, and his paths in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known.* But the end is sure. Think what wisdom that must be, which comprehends such an infinite variety of men and things, differently and oppositely pursued by them, but ordered by Him, to his glory, and the Church's welfare! Precious Lord Jesus! grant both to Reader and Writer, grace to be always looking up to thee, and seeking thy wisdom to guide; thy power to protect; and thy love to bless, all the events which concern ourselves, and thy people. And while we both take confidence, and holy joy, that if thou art for us, who can be against us, may a sense of thine unerring wisdom, constrain us continually to exclaim, *oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God? How unsearchable are thy judgments, and thy ways past finding out!*

CHAP. XIII.

CONTENTS.

The Prophet in this Chapter is teaching by signs, as he had before been instructing by plain discourse. Under the similitude of a girdle made rotten, and of bottles perishing with wine; the Prophet sheweth the sad consequences of the children of his people, consuming in their captivity. The Chapter closeth with a gracious call of God to his people.

THUS saith the LORD unto me, Go, and get thee a linen girdle, and put it upon thy loins, and put it not in water.

2 So I got a girdle, according to the word of the LORD, and put it on my loins.

3 And the word of the LORD came unto me the second time, saying,

4 Take the girdle that thou hast got, which is

upon thy loins, and arise, go to Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole of the rock.

5 So I went and hid it by Euphrates, as the LORD commanded me.

6 And it came to pass after many days, that the LORD said unto me, Arise, go to Euphrates, and take the girdle from thence, which I commanded thee to hide there.

7 Then I went to Euphrates, and digged, and took the girdle from the place where I had hid it; and behold, the girdle was marred, it was profitable for nothing.

Jeremiah spared no pains, and thought nothing of his trouble to follow up the Lord's commissions. *Euphrates* was no small distance from Jerusalem: but yet we find thither the Prophet went both to carry the girdle thither and to go for it again. Some have thought, however, that this was rather a vision.

8 Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

9 Thus saith the LORD, After this manner will I marr the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem.

10 This evil people which refuse to hear my words, which walk in the imagination of their heart, and walk after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, shall even be as this girdle, which is good for nothing.

11 For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man; so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel, and the whole house of Judah, saith the LORD; that they might be unto me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory: but they would not hear.

The signs and types are doubly beautiful, and interesting, which God the Holy Ghost himself explains. And here we have the Lord's own illustration of it. Our whole nature was marred by sin; and when the Lord gathered from the mass, his people Israel, and chose them for his portion; how did he cause to cleave unto him, both Judah and Israel for a name, and a glory, and a praise, above all the people of the earth. But when by sin, and transgression they departed from the Lord, like Jeremiah's girdle, thrown by, and marred,

nothing but sovereign grace can renew and restore. Oh! blessed Jesus! what eternal praises are due to thee, for the recovery of our fallen nature! All our pride is for ever done away, in the recollection, that but for thy gracious interposition we must have been marred for ever!

12 ¶ Therefore thou shalt speak unto them this word, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Every bottle shall be filled with wine: and they shall say unto thee, Do we not certainly know, that every bottle shall be filled with wine?

13 Then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land, even the kings that sit upon David's throne, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with drunkenness.

14 And I will dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together, saith the LORD: I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy them.

Here we have another similitude, and it it should seem, it was highly suited to the people, to whom the Prophet delivered it. In wine countries, such as Judea, all orders of the people knew the use of it. But alas! they knew also the *abuse* of it. The Prophet therefore, by this figure, seems to have intended, that as they were filled with drunkenness, so should they be filled with sorrow. When the Lord's judgment overtook them, in the Babylonish captivity, this was the case. Read in confirmation Psalm cxxxvii.

15 ¶ Hear ye, and give ear, be not proud, for the LORD hath spoken.

16 Give glory to the LORD your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light, ye turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.

17 But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for *your* pride, and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD's flock is carried away captive.

Who can read this account of the mournful prophet, but must revere his memory? Oh! how delightful is it to behold a faithful pastor, taking interest in all that concerns his people! But while the memory of Jeremiah on this account is blessed, and that of all faith-

ful ministers in the Church; with what glory doth Christ appear in his unequalled affection, whose tears for Jerusalem were so many, and whose sweat, great drops of blood?

18 Say unto the king, and to the queen, Humble yourselves, sit down; for your principalities shall come down, *even* the crown of your glory.

19 The cities of the south shall be shut up, and none shall open *them*; Judah shall be carried away captive all of it, it shall be wholly carried away captive.

20 Lift up your eyes, and behold them that come from the north: where *is* the flock *that* was given thee, thy beautiful flock?

21 What wilt thou say when he shall punish thee? (for thou hast taught them *to be* captains, *and* as chief over thee) shall not sorrows take thee as a woman in travail?

22 ¶ And if thou say in thine heart, Wherefore come these things upon me? For the greatness of thine iniquity are thy skirts discovered, *and* thy heels made bare.

23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? *then* may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.

24 Therefore will I scatter them as the stubble that passeth away by the wind of the wilderness.

25 This *is* thy lot, the portion of thy measures from me, saith the LORD: because thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in falsehood.

26 Therefore will I discover thy skirts upon thy face, that thy shame may appear.

27 I have seen thine adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredom, *and* thine abominations on the hills in the fields: woe unto thee, O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean? when *shall it* once be?

I interrupt not the reading of those verses, because they are connected. They contain the solemn expostulation of the Lord, in the view of their sins. They point out also the utter impossibility of the

sinner's recovery by any efforts of his own, under the strong figure of the black hue of the Ethiopian, and of the spots of the leopard. But here again precious Jesus, how unspeakably blessed is it to the soul of thy redeemed, that what *the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh; thou through the Father's sending, hast in thine own flesh accomplished*; Rom. viii. 3. And dost thou say to me as to Jerusalem, *wilt thou not be made clean?* Oh! for grace to look unto thee, that I may be made whole by thee!

REFLECTIONS.

My soul! while reading the sad history of the Church, in this period of it, and beholding Jerusalem as a marred girdle and a bottle spoiled; oh learn from hence what nature is in itself in all ages; when the preventing and restraining grace of God is withheld! How poor, and weak, and blind, and wretched! Oh! thou who alone canst keep from falling; give me Lord I pray thee grace, that darkness come not, and *my feet stumble not upon the dark mountains!*

And shall not my soul take occasion from the review of this solemn Chapter, to look up to Jesus with encresing earnestness, and beg of him for Zion in the present day? Dost thou say Lord now, as thou didst by thy servant the Prophet then; *where is the flock that was given, the beautiful flock?* Behold it Lord, I would say, let thine eye pity and compassionate it. It is indeed scattered in this dark and cloudy day. But wilt thou not gather it, and bring it home, and build it up, and command pastors after thine own heart, to feed it with true understanding and knowledge? Oh! precious Lord Jesus, thou great Shepherd of thy sheep; *be not wrath very sore, neither remember iniquity for ever. Behold! see we are all thy people.*

CHAP. XIV.

CONTENTS.

It should seem that the Prophet's preaching, and his types, were followed by a famine. He takes notice of it in this Chapter, and mourns over it. The Lord is not intreated to remove it. Lying prophets deceive the people concerning it.

THE word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah concerning the dearth.

2 Judah mourneth, and the gates thereof languish, they are black unto the ground, and the cry of Jerusalem is gone up.

3 And their nobles have sent their little ones to the waters, they came to the pits, and found no water, they returned with their vessels empty: they were ashamed, and confounded, and covered their heads,

4 Because the ground is chapt, for there was no rain in the earth, the ploughmen were ashamed, they covered their heads.

5 Yea, the hind also calved in the field, and forsook *it*, because there was no grass.

6 And the wild asses did stand in the high places, they snuffed up the wind like dragons: their eyes did fail, because *there was* no grass.

We have here an account of the famine, which by the parallel history took place in the reign of *Jehoiakim*; probably just before the captivity. *Jeremiah* had mourned for the good king *Josiah*; see 2 Chron. xxxv. 25. and in the succeeding reign, it is supposed, that this famine followed. The Prophet appears to have lamented it in his Lamentations, chap. ii. The Lord not unfrequently sends after his word, afflictions; that both may under his grace, operate together.

7 ¶ O LORD, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou *it* for thy name's sake: for our backslidings are many, we have sinned against thee.

8 O the hope of Israel, the saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a way-faring man, *that* turneth aside to tarry for a night?

9 Why shouldest thou be as a man astonished, as a mighty man *that* cannot save? yet thou, O LORD, *art* in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name, leave us not.

Nothing can be more beautiful and expressive, than this prayer of the Prophet. *First*, he confesses sin: Levit. xxvi. *Secondly*, he takes hold of the best and only argument for forgiveness; God's covenant promises in his name; that is, in Christ. Psalm cvi. 8. Isaiah, xliii. 25. *Thirdly*, he pleads the merits of the Saviour. Isaiah, xlv. 21, 22. And *lastly*, he observes the union the Lord had with, and interest in, his people. Joshua, ages before, had pleaded the same, and found success, Joshua, vii. 8, 9. Reader! do not overlook these pleas, for they are unanswerable; in the hour of distress Jehovah's name's sake, is the one glorious cause, of all our rich mercies in Christ; Ezek. xxxvi. 32.

10 ¶ Thus saith the LORD unto this people, Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet, therefore the LORD doth not

accept them; he will now remember their iniquity, and visit their sins.

11 Then said the LORD unto me, Pray not for this people for *their* good.

12 When they fast, I will not hear their cry, and when they offer burnt-offering and an oblation, I will not accept them: but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence.

These are solemn scriptures: and awful is it, when the Lord restrains prayer in his people, by withholding the spirit of grace and supplication. But we find in scripture beautiful instances, where the Lord still encourages his people to plead with him; when seemingly he is coming forth as an enemy. Witness Jacob's wrestling with the angel, Gen. xxxii. 24—30. Moses also, still pleads, Exod. xxxii. 10—14. And what a lovely example is that, of the woman of Canaan with our Lord, Matt. xv. 22—28.

13 Then said I, Ah Lord GOD, behold the prophets say unto them, Ye shall not see the sword, neither shall ye have famine, but I will give you assured peace in this place.

14 Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name, I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision, and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.

15 Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that prophesy in my name, and I sent them not, yet they say, Sword and famine shall not be in this land, By sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed.

16 And the people to whom they prophesy, shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem, because of the famine, and the sword; and they shall have none to bury them, their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters: for I will pour their wickedness upon them.

17 ¶ Therefore thou shalt say this word unto

them, Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease : for the virgin of my people is broken with a great breach, with a very grievous blow.

18 If I go forth into the field, then behold the slain with the sword ; and if I enter into the city, then behold them that are sick with famine ; yea, both the prophet and the priest go about into a land that they know not.

19 Hast thou utterly rejected Judah ? hath thy soul loathed Zion ? why hast thou smitten us, and *there is* no healing for us ? we looked for peace, and *there is* no good ; and for the time of healing, and behold trouble.

20 We acknowledge, O LORD, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers : for we have sinned against thee.

21 Do not abhor *us*, for thy name's sake, do not disgrace the throne of thy glory : remember break not thy covenant with us.

22 As there *any* among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain ? or can the heavens give showers ? *art* not thou he, O LORD our God ? therefore we will wait upon thee : for thou hast made all these *things*.

Faithful ministers cannot but feel grief at the conduct of false teachers, who prophecy smooth things, and prophecy deceit. *Jeremiah* had to encounter with many in his days, of this description : and no age of the Church hath ever been free of them. But God's faithfulness is not impeached, nor lessened by the deceitfulness of men. His people are commanded to go to the word, to the law, and to the testimony, for evidences of the truth : *Isaiah* viii. 20. What a gracious prayer the Prophet here offers. Oh ! that all ministers would find grace to follow his example. Zion never needed it more than now !

REFLECTIONS.

READER ! we cannot make a better improvement of this precious Chapter, than by following up the example the Prophet hath here left us, both in times of public calamity, and private visitation ; in besieging a throne of grace upon the same ground, and pleading for

mercy on the same arguments, as the Prophet here useth. Sit down and ponder over the many strong and unswerable pleas, every poor sinner hath in this one cause of holy confidence, the name of Jehovah. The covenant purposes, counsel, will, declaration of Jehovah. Moreover, his unchangeable promises, founded in his own free and eternal love. To these add the word, the oath, those immutable things of Jehovah, in which it is impossible for God to lie. Then open at the same time, the infinite volume of grace, in the Person, work, blood, grace, spirit, and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Call in yet further to your aid, the person, offices, and eternal grace of God the Holy Ghost. And when these grand and glorious truths are fully impressed upon the mind; sit down and devise names if you can find them to misery and sin, in all the various shapes of it: and see if there be not found somewhat in those blessed views of the Almighty covenanters, to answer and satisfy all. Oh! thou *the hope of Israel* I would say, both for myself and Reader: Oh thou art both *the hope and Saviour thereof: why shouldst thou be as a stranger in the land, as a wayfaring man, that turneth aside to tarry but for a night, and takest no interest in the concerns of thy people; Do not abhor us for thy Name's sake: do not disgrace the throne of thy glory?*

CHAP. XV.

CONTENTS.

This is as sorrowful a Chapter as any in the prophecy. Though the last had closed with prayer, yet this begins and ends with judgment.

THEN said the LORD unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, *yet my mind could not be toward this people; cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth.*

Reader! I cannot pass over this verse, without instantly making this observation: Though neither Samuel, nor Moses, can prevail for sinners, yet there is One mightier than both, whom the Father heareth always. Oh! how precious is to think, that Jesus cannot fail in his intercession, though all other intercessors fail. His blood is a *speaking* blood. And he ever liveth to appear, and to make intercession in the presence of God for us. Heb. xii. 24. Heb. vii. 25.

2 And it shall come to pass, if they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth? then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the LORD, Such as *are* for death, to death; and such as *are* for the sword, to the sword; and such as *are* for the famine, to the famine; and such as *are* for the captivity to the captivity.

3 And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith

the LORD; the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heavens, and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy.

4 And I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah king of Judah, for *that* which he did in Jerusalem.

5 For who shall have pity upon thee, O Jerusalem? or who shall bemoan thee? or who shall go aside to ask how thou doest?

6 Thou hast forsaken me, saith the LORD, thou art gone backward: therefore will I stretch out my hand against thee, and destroy thee; I am weary with repenting.

7 And I will fan them with a fan in the gates of the land: I will bereave *them* of children, I will destroy my people, *since* they return not from their ways.

8 Their widows are increased to me above the sand of the seas: I have brought upon them, against the mother of the young men, a spoiler at noon day: I have caused *him* to fall upon it suddenly, and terrors upon the city.

9 She that hath borne seven, languisheth: she hath given up the ghost, her sun is gone down while *it was* yet day: she hath been ashamed and confounded, and the residue of them will I deliver to the sword before their enemies, saith the LORD.

These judgments had their accomplishment, in the captivity that followed, when the people were carried away to Babylon.

10 ¶ Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife, and a man of contention to the whole earth: I have neither lent on usury, nor men have lent to me on usury, *yet* every one of them doth curse me.

11 The LORD said, Verily it shall be well with thy remnant, verily I will cause the enemy to en-

treat thee *well* in the time of evil, and in the time of affliction.

12 Shall iron break the northern iron, and the steel?

13 Thy substance and thy treasures will I give to the spoil, without price, and *that* for all thy sins, even in all thy borders.

14 And I will make *thee* to pass with thine enemies, into a land *which* thou knowest not: for a fire is kindled in mine anger, *which* shall burn upon you.

We have here the prophet mourning unmanfully. Jeremiah affords an instance, that he, like all others of Adam's race, partook of the common stock of corruption. Alas! how unsuitable and unbecoming is it, in men of grace to complain. Jeremiah thought so in a cooler moment; See his Lamentations, Chap. iii. 39. Poor Job before him, had vented his sorrow in a language unbecoming, Job, iii. 2—19. And Jeremiah as if pleased with those angry expressions, repeated them with still stronger language, Chap. xx. 14—18. Alas! what is man, even the best of men, even a Prophet; consecrated from the womb to be a prophet of the Lord? Chap. i. 5. Oh! precious, precious Lord Jesus, to whom shall we look but to thee; whose whole nature was *holy, harmless, undefiled; separate from sinners and made higher than the heavens*, Heb. vii. 26.

15 ¶ O LORD, thou knowest, remember me, and visit me, and revenge me of my persecutors, take me not away in thy long-suffering: know that for thy sake I have suffered rebuke.

16 Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart, for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

17 I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of thy hand: for thou hast filled me with indignation.

18 Why is my pain perpetual? and my wound incurable *which* refuseth to be healed? wilt thou be altogether unto me as a liar, *and as waters that fail*?

19 ¶ Therefore thus saith the LORD, If thou return, then will I bring thee again, *and thou*

shalt stand before me: and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth: let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them.

20 And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brasen wall, and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I *am* with thee to save thee, and to deliver thee, saith the LORD.

21 And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible.

Though the Lord would not listen to the prophet's prayer, to avert the visitation concerning the captivity; yet for Jeremiah's personal safety, the Lord remembered his covenant: see Chap. i. 20. Reader! it is blessed in times of public calamity, to lay hold on the personal promises in Christ; and to remember, that the love of Jesus to his Church, however outward things may vary, is the same as Jesus himself, *yesterday, and to day, and for ever*, Heb. xiii. 8. Oh! for grace to know this, and live upon an unchangeable God in Christ; when all-things in us and about us, are changing continually.

REFLECTIONS.

In reading this Chapter, I find so much of blessedness leading to the Lord Jesus Christ, that I cannot need more than the first verse opens to me, to feast upon in Jesus for ever. What though Samuel and Moses are no intercessors; *though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledgeth us not*; yet thou blessed Jesus hast stood in the gap, and dost for ever stand, *having obtained eternal redemption for us*. Here then, amidst all the calamities of life, whether in private or public, nationally or individually; here would I rest my plea, my only plea, for I need no other. Looking to God my Father in Christ, I would say, both for myself and the Church of Jesus; *behold O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed!* And wilt not thou, O Lord Jesus, take up the case and concerns of all thy people? Though our iniquities testify against us, and our sins are aggravated sore; yet Lord, such is the everlasting and eternal efficacy of thy blood and righteousness; such the infinite merit of both, that they plead more for thy people, than all their sins can plead against them. Oh! how would I treasure this word concerning thee; wherein thou hast caused me to hope. I have found them indeed, and have eaten them; and they have been the rejoicing and joy of my heart: yea Lord, I have found thee, the Uncreated Word; and do thou Lord dwell evermore in my heart by faith. Lord do by me, as by thy servant the Prophet; make me as a fenced brazen wall, strong in the grace of faith, that is in Christ Jesus. Be

thou with me to save me, and to deliver me, O Lord; so shall I not be confounded, when times of persecution arise, and the enemy cometh in like a flood; for then will my Lord lift up a standard, even Christ Jesus against him.

CHAP. XVI.

CONTENTS.

This is a short, but interesting Chapter; in which, the Lord commands his servant the Prophet, in looking forward to the times of the Captivity, to keep himself unconnected because of his judgments. The Lord pronounceth great evils; but the Chapter closeth in sweet promises, concerning the deliverance of his people; which he promiseth shall be even greater than that from Egypt.

THE word of the LORD came also unto me, saying,

2 Thou shalt not take thee a wife, neither shalt thou have sons nor daughters in this place.

3 For thus saith the LORD concerning the sons, and concerning the daughters *that are* born in this place, and concerning their mothers that bare them, and concerning their fathers that begat them in this land.

4 They shall die of grievous deaths, they shall not be lamented, neither shall they be buried: *but* they shall be as dung upon the face of the earth, and they shall be consumed by the sword, and by famine, and their carcasses shall be meat for the fowls of heaven, and for the beasts of the earth.

5 For thus saith the LORD, Enter not into the house of mourning, neither go to lament, nor bemoan them: for I have taken away my peace from this people, saith the LORD, *even* loving kindness and mercies.

6 Both the great and the small shall die in this land: they shall not be buried, neither shall *men* lament for them, nor cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them.

7 Neither shall *men* tear *themselves* for them in mourning, to comfort them for the dead, neither

shall *men* give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or for their mother.

I venture to read this precept given to Jeremiah, concerning marriage while in Babylon, both with a national and spiritual view. No alliances were to be made by the people of God, with their idolatrous neighbours. And this, not only to keep them from idolatry; but to preserve the holy seed pure, distinct, and uncorrupt; and specially with an eye to Christ. Hence we find the genealogy of Christ, is so faithfully recorded by the Evangelists, Matt. i. and Luke iii. 23 to the end. Whether my views in this passage be right or not, still the Reader will not find it unsuitable to the general idea of scripture; for the Lord hath himself dwelt largely upon the subject, in several places. Hosea, ii. Isaiah, liv. 5, 6. Jeremiah, iii. 14. And I confess, that I am the more inclined to this view of the subject, in a spiritual point, from that solemn expression which is in the midst of it; in which the Lord saith, *I have taken away my peace from this people*: perhaps (for I do not presume to determine) it means, that the Lord hath taken away his people's views of peace in Christ, the promised seed, when they found themselves in captivity; and for a while their hopes were cut off. They had lost the faith of that peace, and joy in believing, which their fathers had in seeing, the day of Christ afar off. And of course it made their bondage yet more grievous. Hence the Church cried out; *thou hast removed my soul far off from peace: I forgot prosperity: And I said, my strength and my hope is perished from the Lord*, Lament. iii. 17, 18.

8 Thou shalt not also go into the house of feasting, to sit with them to eat and to drink.

9 For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will cause to cease out of this place in your eyes, and in your days, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride.

As the Lord prohibited the prophet from mourning in Babylon, so from feasting; both were alike unsuitable, while the Comforter was far away. I pray the Reader to notice in both views the preciousness of Jesus, the peace and consolation of his people, to sweeten and sanctify all states.

10 ¶ And it shall come to pass when thou shalt shew this people all these words, and they shall say unto thee, Wherefore hath the LORD pronounced all this great evil against us? or what *is* our iniquity? or what *is* our sin that we have committed against the LORD our God?

11 Then shalt thou say unto them, Because your fathers have forsaken me, saith the LORD,

and have walked after other gods, and have served them, and have worshipped them, and have forsaken me, and have not kept my law :

12 And ye have done worse than your fathers (for behold, ye walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart, that they may not hearken unto me).

13 Therefore will I cast you out of this land, into a land that ye know not, *neither* ye nor your fathers; and there shall ye serve other gods day and night, where I will not shew you favour.

There is a wonderful degree of condescension, implied on the part of God in what is here said. Where there is an enquiry seriously set up in the soul, concerning the ways and works of God, in his visitation; there the Lord will vouchsafe to explain. Reader! let this encourage in all dark seasons, to tell out your sorrows and exercises, and place them down before the throne!

14 ¶ Therefore behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be said, The LORD liveth that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;

15 But, The LORD liveth that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers.

Whether from the divine pleasure, which the Lord took in delivering his people in those instances, which most strongly represented their spiritual deliverance from sin and hell, by the Lord Jesus: or whether in the repeating that deliverance, in the case from Babylon, as the time drew nearer, when the thing represented in type, should be accomplished in reality; or whether from any other cause, which we know not, the Lord thought proper so to do; but the fact is so, that the Lord upon many occasions, speaks of a greater mercy in the Church's emancipation from Babylon than from Egypt. That both were eminently typical, is too plain to be doubted. But it is our duty to accept what the Lord hath said with implicit faith. See Jeremiah xxiii. 7, 8. I cannot doubt, but that the pre-eminency in the case of being delivered from Babylon, arose from the nearness to which that event stood, to the glorious salvation by Jesus, compared to the distant age of Egypt.

16 ¶ Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the LORD, and they shall fish them: and after

will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks.

17 For mine eyes *are* upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes.

18 And first I will recompense their iniquity, and their sin double; because they have defiled my land, they have filled mine inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable and abominable things.

Are not those fishers in allusion to what Christ said of his Apostles, Matt. iv. 19, 20. And is not the recompence the Lord is here said to make to their sin, that wound of the spirit, which the Holy Ghost when convincing of sin, makes in the heart, in order to lead to Jesus? John, xvi. 8.

19 O LORD, my strength and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and *things wherein there is no profit.*

20 Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they are no gods?

21 Therefore behold, I will this once cause them to know, I will cause them to know mine hand, and my might, and they shall know that my name is the LORD.

The prayer of the Prophet is a beautiful break in the subject; as if the man of God felt his mind instantly led out, so to look up and plead with the Lord, from what had been said. And the burden of his prayer seems to be taking hold of the Lord's promise, concerning the call of the Gentiles; which the Apostle Paul, in after ages, had it in commission to tell the Church, should provoke the jealousy of Israel. If so, it is a blessed illustration of this passage. Let the Reader consult the scripture, and then compare both. Romans xi. 11. to the end.

REFLECTIONS.

My soul! gather from the Lord's precept, to his servant the Prophet; not to marry, nor mingle with the nations of the captivity; how much it concerns thee, to sit aloof, and as much detached as possible, from all persons, and all things, which might have a ten-

dency to draw thine affections from the Lord! Remember, that *thy Maker is thine husband*. And doth he not say to thee, as to the Church of old, *thou shalt abide for me many days: thou shalt not play the harlot: and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee*. Precious Lord Jesus! blessed be thou, for thine infinite condescension. Oh! give me grace ever to keep it in view, and to call to mind; wherever I am, or however engaged, amidst the Babylons of this wilderness-state, that my indigence, Jesus neither overlooks, nor despiseth; but will keep me during the captivity, and at length bring me out of more than the Egyptian bondage. Neither in the house of mourning, or of feasting, would I lose sight of my Lord! And oh! grant, that I may constantly have the grace of faith in thee; that the peace in Jesus may be never lost sight of, no not for a moment. But oh! let my constant song in this house of my pilgrimage, be, *the Lord liveth that hath brought the souls of his people, from the north, and from all lands whither they had been driven; and now brought them into the liberty, wherewith Jesus makes them free*. Yea, they shall dwell in their own land, even Emmanuel's land, for ever. Amen.

CHAP. XVII.

CONTENTS.

Much to the same purport, as the general scope of Jeremiah's preaching, is the subject of this chapter. The folly and sin of carnal confidence; and the blessedness and security of the divine trust, are beautifully set forth. The Lord's knowledge of the heart is strikingly insisted upon as an evidence of his sovereignty.

THE sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond; it is graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars:

2 Whilst their children remember their altars and their groves by the green trees upon the high hills.

What is here said of Judah's sin, may be equally said of all men's sins: they are cut in and formed in the very heart. Nothing short of a new heart, wrought by the Lord himself, can form a change. Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

3 O my mountain in the field, I will give thy substance, and all thy treasures to the spoil, and thy high places for sin throughout all thy borders.

4 And thou, even thyself shall discontinue from thine heritage that I gave thee, and I will cause thee to serve thine enemies in the land which thou

knowest not: for ye have kindled a fire in mine anger, *which* shall burn for ever.

Observe when the Lord threatens punishment, he still speaks of his mountain and his people. Israel and Judah are still the Lord's, though chastened with the chastisement of a man. Jeremiah, xxxi. 20.

5 ¶ Thus saith the LORD, Cursed *be* the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

6 For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, *in* a salt land, and not inhabited.

Reader! as you read these verses do not fail to enquire, in what this sin of trusting in man consisteth: that we may avoid the punishment. May not that man be said to have fallen into it, who placeth the least confidence in his own righteousness, to the slighting the full and complete justifying righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, Romans, x. 3.

7 Blessed *is* the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.

8 For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and *that* spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

What a beautiful contrast do these verses contain, to those which were before; and in what a lovely manner is that well founded trust in the Lord pointed out, under the similitude of a tree planted by the river. Reader! only make reference of what is here said to the Church planted in Christ, and by Christ, the Tree of life, and what glories pour in upon the soul, from such a view of the doctrine? Rom. xxii. 2.

9 ¶ The heart *is* deceitful above *all things*, and desperately wicked, who can know it?

10 I the LORD search the heart, *I* try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, *and* according to the fruit of his doings.

Had we no other authority than what these verses furnish, here is enough to prove, that after all our knowledge of ourselves, we have not arrived to the perfect apprehension to what a state of sin and self-deception man is reduced by the fall. But however ignorant we are of ourselves to the Lord, the most secret thoughts of our heart are open. What an argument ariseth from hence, to beg the Lord to

cleanse us from our secret faults, and to bring us to the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. Psalm xix. 12. Zech. xiii. 1.

11 *As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not: so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.*

Some naturalists have given this account of the Partridge. And it forms a striking representation of the man of riches brooding over his riches, which after all bring forth nothing but disappointment. See our Lord's account, Luke, xii. 16—21.

12 ¶ A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary.

13 O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters.

14 Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved; for thou art my praise.

15 ¶ Behold, they say unto me, Where is the word of the LORD? let it come now.

16 As for me, I have not hastened from being a pastor to follow thee, neither have I desired the woeful day, thou knowest: that which came out of my lips, was right before thee.

17 Be not a terror unto me, thou art my hope in the day of evil.

18 Let them be confounded that persecute me, but let not me be confounded: let them be dismayed, but let not me be dismayed: bring upon them the day of evil, and destroy them with double destruction.

This passage seems to be a break in the midst of the Prophet's sermon, in which he fervently addresseth the Lord in prayer, and a blessed prayer it is. It needs no comment: for it is as plain as it is earnest. These are blessed interruptions to preaching, when the Man of God leaves off for a moment speaking to his people, from God, in order to speak for his people to God.

19 ¶ Thus saith the LORD unto me, Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people,

whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem ;

20 And say unto them, Hear ye the word of the LORD, ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates.

21 Thus saith the LORD, Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath-day, nor bring *it* in by the gates of Jerusalem.

22 Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers.

23 But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear nor receive instruction.

24 And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the LORD, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath-day, but hallow the sabbath-day, to do no work therein ;

25 Then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots, and on horses, they and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and this city shall remain for ever.

26 And they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the places round about Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the plain, and from the mountains, and from the south, bringing burnt-offerings and sacrifices, and meat-offerings, and incense, and bringing sacrifices of praise unto the house of the LORD.

27 But if ye will not hearken unto me, to hallow the sabbath-day : and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the

sabbath-day ; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.

No sooner had the Prophet finished his prayer, than he begins again his Sermon. It is a delightful transition from preaching to prayer, and from prayer to preaching. Both form a part in the minister's commission. We have here God's command blended with his promise, for the sanctification of the sabbath. Oh ! who can read it, and the awful judgments connected with the breach of the sabbath, but must tremble for our British Judah and Jerusalem ? Oh ! for the Lord to pour out of the residue of his Holy Spirit, that we may reverence his sabbaths !

REFLECTIONS.

WHEN I read of the state of sin on the heart of Judah, as stated in this Chapter : and when I consider, what my own heart saith of the same, and the testimony of God concerning the desperately wicked state of every man's heart by nature : my soul feels humbled to the dust, and like the leper we read of, I feel constrained to cry out, unclean, unclean ! But oh precious Jesus, thou that art the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof, *heal me, and I shall be healed : save me, and I shall be saved !*

And my soul, ponder well the striking difference between the confidence founded in the Lord Jesus's blood and righteousness ; and that trust which is in an arm of flesh. Behold the blessedness of the one, and the awful curse on the other. Oh ! thou blessed Lord Jesus, be thou to me the unceasing source of life, and health, and strength, and confidence ; and let not my soul be as the barren heath, that knoweth not when good cometh, and as the parched places in the wilderness, that is, as a salt land not inhabited.

Blessed, for ever blessed be the Lord for the sabbath, that sweet day for men ! Oh ! for grace to honour it, to reverence it, to love it, and to sanctify and hallow it to the Lord's glory. Oh thou great Lord of the sabbath, preserve it to our nation, to our people ; and be thou the very sabbath of our souls, and our hope of glory for ever. Amen.

CHAP. XVIII.

CONTENTS.

The Prophet, in this Chapter, is preaching by type and figure. Under the similitude of a Potter, the Lord sheweth his sovereignty. The people are offended at the Prophet's preaching. The Lord threatens them with sore judgments.

THE word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

2 Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.

It is blessed for every child of God, and much more for all the Prophets of the Lord, I mean the ministers of the Lord, to sit down in silent waiting at the feet of Jesus to be prepared for his service. That public ministry is likely to be blessed, that is the result of divine direction, in silent and private waiting on the Lord. Isaiah, xl. 31. and Isaiah, xli. 1.

3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.

4 And the vessel that he made of clay, was marred in the hand of the potter, so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make *it*.

5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay *is* in the potter's hands, so *are* ye in mine hands, O house of Israel.

Reader! Was not our nature marred by sin after it came out of the hands of our Almighty Potter? Did the Lord throw it away? No! He new made it in Christ Jesus. Oh! what numberless, sweet instructions, arise out of this view of the subject. Blessed Jesus! thou hast not only made thy people new creatures in thee; but by virtue of their union and oneness with thee, they are holier than they were before. And not only so, but from the same source they are now secure, and which as it proved, they were not before, from all possibility of any future marring. Sweet thought!

7 *At what* instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy *it*:

8 If that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.

9 And *at what* instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build, and to plant *it*:

10 If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them.

11 ¶ Now therefore go to, speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, say-

ing, Thus saith the LORD, Behold I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you: return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.

12 And they said, There is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart.

The Lord himself explains and applies his type of the Potter. And in Jesus how hath the doctrine been fully proved? Surely the Lord can with infinitely more ease create new hearts in his people, and reform both a people and a nation, by the mere sovereignty of his holy word, than the Potter who worketh on vessels of clay, can new make from the broken portions which are marred. But alas! how sin hardens, so as to make the sinner despair, in spite of God's grace, and the declared purposes of God's love, Jerem. ii. 25.

13 Therefore thus saith the LORD, Ask ye now among the heathen, who hath heard such things: the virgin of Israel hath done a very horrible thing.

14 Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon, which cometh from the rock of the field? or shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place, be forsaken?

15 Because my people hath forgotten me, they have burnt incense to vanity, and they have caused them to stumble in their ways *from* the ancient paths, to walk in paths, *in* a way not cast up;

16 To make their land desolate, and a perpetual hissing: every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished, and wag his head.

17 I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy: I will shew them the back and not the face in the day of their calamity.

What a striking expostulation is in the opening of these verses? The Lord sends his people to ask of the heathen, among whom it was never known, of such apostasy from their dunghill gods, as Israel manifested in backsliding from the true God. In hot sultry climates, how grateful is the cold flowing water to the traveller? And was it ever known to be rejected? Whereas Israel revolted continually from the Lord. Reader! let us not confine this subject to Israel of old: but pause and enquire whether the Israel of God now, manifest a closer walking with the Lord? Alas! how disposed are we to leave the fountain of living waters, and to be hewing out to ourselves cisterns, *broken cisterns, wherein is no water!* Jerem. ii. 13.

18 ¶ Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah: for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet: come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words.

Reader! do not hastily pass over this verse. Look through all ages of the Church, and behold the same continually acting over again, towards all the faithful servants of the Lord. One of the surest marks, that that minister is faithful, and his services blessed, who is abused by the ungodly; and both himself and his labours made the drunkard's song. It would be a melancholy prospect in a gospel Church, where the accused adversary made no opposition. Matt. v. 11, 12. John, xvi. 32, 33.

19 Give heed to me, O LORD, and hearken to the voice of them that contend with me.

20 Shall evil be recompensed for good? for they have digged a pit for my soul: remember that I stood before thee to speak good for them, *and* to turn away thy wrath from them.

21 Therefore deliver up their children to the famine, and pour out their *blood* by the force of the sword, and let their wives be bereaved of their children, and *be* widows, and let their men be put to death, *let* their young men be slain by the sword in battle.

22 Let a cry be heard from their houses, when thou shalt bring a troop suddenly upon them, for they have digged a pit to take me, and hid snares for my feet.

23 Yet, LORD, thou knowest all their counsel against me to slay *me*: forgive not their iniquity, neither blot out their sin from thy sight, but let them be overthrown before thee; deal *thus* with them in the time of thine anger.

Prayer is the sure relief of an afflicted mind; and more especially if men persecute, where can we find support but in God? The apparent harshness of the Prophet's prayer, ceases to be so, when we consider, for whom those judgments are desired, namely, the sworn foes of God and of his Christ. Reader! you will always find relief from reading scriptures of this kind spoken by Jesus, or his servants,

as referring to the seed of the serpent. The war began between Abel and Cain, and hath continued ever since, and will continue, until time is lost in eternity. And let not the Reader forget, that the happiness of the redeemed in heaven, can only consist in the everlasting and uninterrupted enjoyment of God and the Lamb. The day of vengeance, and the year of the Redeemed are connected in one, The everlasting destruction of Satan, and his kingdom, his people, children, and empire, form as grand a part in the scheme of Christ's triumphs, as the everlasting happiness of his chosen. Oh! for grace to take part with all that belongs to Christ, and to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. Isaiah, lxiii. 4. Rev. xii. 10. Ruth, i. 16, 17.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let it be your delight and mine, to go down very frequently to the Potter's house, where the Lord will cause us to hear his word. Surely, we may cry out with the Church of old upon every occasion of life; *but now O Lord! thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou our Potter; and we, all are the work of thine hands.* And shall the thing formed, say to him that formed him, why hast thou made me thus? And if it be (as that it undoubtedly is) the Lord's privilege and prerogative, to make vessels of the same clay, to different purposes, and some to honour, and some to dishonour; shall not the Lord *new make* also, as he pleaseth; and not only new make, but *use also*, to the different purposes of his own sacred will and pleasure? Lord! I pray thee, do by me, and appoint me, and use me as it seemeth best to thine unerring counsel, purpose, and will: but oh! new make me in Christ Jesus, and make me a vessel to the master's use, to serve him here, and glorify him to all eternity!

Lord! to all the devices of the ungodly, and all the malice of the foe and his agents, against thy faithful ones, like the Prophet; give to thy servants grace, and to their enemies confusion, that in thy strength, all thine exercised family may be strong, and made more than conquerors, through thee, and thy great salvation.

CHAP. XIX.

CONTENTS.

The Prophet's sermon is here delivered, under the similitude of a Potter's bottle, by way of representing the broken state of the Jews.

THUS saith the LORD, Go and get a potter's earthen bottle, and *take* of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests,

2 And go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which *is* by the entry of the east-gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee:

3 And say, Hear ye the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which, whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle.

4 Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burnt incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents ;

5 They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire *for* burnt-offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake *it*, neither came *it* into my mind :

6 Therefore behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that this place shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter.

7 And I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place, and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hands of them that seek their lives : and their carcasses will I give to be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth.

8 And I will make this city desolate, and an hissing : every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished and hiss, because of all the plagues thereof.

9 And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons, and the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one the flesh of his friend in the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies, and they that seek their lives shall straiten them.

10 Then shalt thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee,

11 And shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Even so will I break this people

and this city, as *one* breaketh a potter's vessel that cannot be made whole again, and they shall bury them *in* Tophet, till *there be* no place to bury.

12 Thus will I do unto this place, saith the LORD, and to the inhabitants thereof, and *even* make this city as Tophet.

13 And the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses of the kings of Judah shall be defiled as the place of Tophet, because of all the houses upon whose roofs they have burnt incense unto all the host of heaven, and have poured out drink-offerings unto other gods.

There are several weighty circumstances which strike our mind, on reading this sermon of Jeremiah. Let the Reader observe in the first place, the Persons whom the Prophet was to gather to hear it: *the ancients of the people and of the priests*. Is it not rather strange, that in a time of such general departure from the truth, and from the service of ordinances, that the hearts of those men should be inclined to attend the Prophet's ministry? But no doubt, the thing was of the Lord. Reader! if the Lord would incline men in our day to attend a preached gospel, the same would take place now. But what an awful consideration is it, that the word of truth is so evil spoken of, and so little regarded. We may observe further, that the place of preaching was no less remarkable; not the temple, but the valley of the son of *Hinnom*. So called from Joshua xv. 8. See also 2 Kings, xxiii. 10. Here, where Israel had provoked the Lord to anger with their idolatries and sacrifices; in the same spot should the Chaldeans put them to shame and destruction by the sword. Never were calamities more striking, nor lamented more bitterly. See Lament. iv. 10. The third observation on this sermon, is the faithfulness of the Preacher. Who can behold Jeremiah thus going on from day to day, undaunted, and without fear, but must admire the firmness of the man, and the glory of the cause in which he was engaged. The fourth remark is, the affirmation the Prophet, at the Lord's command made at the close of his Sermon, in breaking the bottle, to intimate the certainty of it, and as an assurance of what the Lord had said, that as clay in the hand of the Potter: so were the people in the Lord's hands. Chap. xviii. 6. And lastly, to add no more: it should be observed, on the Prophet's sermon, that as the Lord had said, so it came to pass. Jerem. lii. 4—11.

14 Then came Jeremiah from Tophet, whither the LORD had sent him to prophesy, and he stood in the court of the LORD's house, and said to all the people,

15 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will bring upon this city, and upon all her towns, all the evil that I have pronounced against it; because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear my words.

It should seem, by what is here said, that when the Prophet had finished his Sermon, at *Tophet*; and had broken the bottle, in confirmation of what he had said before their eyes, that he returned under the influence of the same Holy Spirit, to add an inference in the courts of the temple. It doth not appear, that the Lord commanded him so to do: but the Prophet took it for granted, that it would be right. It is blessed to see men faithful to God and to souls. The Apostle commended Timothy to be *in season and out of season*. 2 Timothy, iv. 2. Jeremiah here set a noble example, that he was delivered from the fear of man. Lord! make all thy servants in the ministry faithful, that whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear, that they may be free from the blood of souls. Ezekiel, ii. 7. Acts, xx. 25, 26, 27.

REFLECTIONS.

WHAT a most lovely and engaging representation is here made in the character of the Prophet, of a faithful minister. Oh! that it were the Lord's will, that all who stand to minister in the things of salvation, and stand up between an holy God, and unholy sinners; had the salvation of souls at heart as Jeremiah had, and felt no less a zeal for the Lord's honour and glory. How truly ought they to be affected with the awful responsibility of their commission! How unweariedly ought they to labour, night and day in such a service! And in those instances, where, like the Prophet, their labours are despised, and their persons abased, deeply to feel the want of success, and to weep between the porch and the altar, with cries to God in prayer!

Precious Jesus! let that compassion of thine, which filled thy tender heart, when weeping over Jerusalem, constrain thee Lord now, in beholding the state of sin, and the impending Tophet of destruction, to send faithful labourers into thy service. Oh! Lord! commission them: ordain them; fill their mouth with arguments, and their hearers hearts with grace, that they may not spend their strength in vain, and their labour for nought. Yea Lord! come thyself in the power of thy blessed Spirit, and turn to thyself a people of a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, *to serve him with one consent.* Amen.

C H A P. XX.

CONTENTS.

We have here an interesting Chapter. The man of God is smitten and put into the stocks, for preaching God's truth. The governor that commanded this is threatened with judgment for it. The Prophet mourns in the close of the Chapter over his calamities.

NOW Pashur the son of Immer the priest, who *was* also chief governor in the house of the LORD, heard that Jeremiah prophesied these things.

2 Then Pashur smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that *were* in the high gate of Benjamin, which *was* by the house of the LORD.

Reader! pause over this account. Recollect how Jeremiah was called to the prophet's office : Chap. i. 5. Recollect the long and painful office he had now exercised, and the universal disregard he found to all his preaching: and then behold how sadly he was requited! When you have duly pondered these things, call to mind that more or less, these are the marks of a faithful minister in God's sanctuary in all ages. Numb. xvi. 3. Acts, xxiii. 1, 2. Nay, look to Jesus under the same, John, xviii. 22, 23.

3 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Pashur brought forth Jeremiah out of the stocks. Then said Jeremiah unto him, The LORD hath not called thy name Pashur but Magor-missabib.

4 For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will make thee a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends, and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and thine eyes shall behold *it*, and I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive into Babylon, and shall slay them with the sword.

5 Moreover, I will deliver all the strength of this city, and all the labours thereof, and all the precious things thereof, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah will I give into the hand of their enemies, which shall spoil them, and take them, and carry them to Babylon.

6 And thou, Pashur, and all that dwell in thine

house, shall go into captivity, and thou shalt come to Babylon, and there thou shalt die, and shalt be buried there, thou and all thy friends, to whom thou hast prophesied lies.

Observe, what holy and becoming boldness in the man of God. Observe what an awful judgment *Pashur* is doomed to suffer. *Magor-missabib*, means, being encompassed with fear round about, as a girdle. It is worthy remark, that *Jeremiah* did not prophesy this of *Pashur*, when under the punishment, but after he was delivered from it. Probably, the Prophet did not receive from the Lord until then, authority so to do. It is always blessed to wait the Lord's time, for executing the Lord's purposes.

7 ¶ O LORD, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me.

8 For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision daily.

The Prophet's complaint to the Lord, of being deceived, means being disappointed. *Jeremiah* concluded, (but too hastily) that the people would regard his preaching, coming from the Lord, and in the Lord's name, and deliver him from them. Chap. i. 19. He felt what all gracious souls feel, distress at the contempt they put upon God's words. And he felt for himself also. But what were the feelings of the Lord Jesus in his unequalled exercises? Psalm xxii. and Psalm lxix.

9 Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But *his word* was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not *stay*.

10 ¶ For I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side: Report, *say they*, and we will report it: all my familiars watched for my halting, *saying*, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him.

11 But the LORD *is* with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail, they shall be greatly

ashamed; for they shall not prosper, *their* everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten.

12 But, O LORD of hosts, that triest the righteous, *and* seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I opened my cause.

13 Sing unto the LORD, praise ye the LORD: for he hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evil-doers.

What a blessed testimony is it to the truth of the holy scriptures, that their effects on the souls of God's people, are in all ages the same. What Jeremiah said, all more or less find, that the word of the Lord is *as a fire and as an hammer*. Reader! can you bear like testimony to its power in *your* heart? Luke, xxiv. 32. And what an uniform correspondence is there in all ages of the Church, among the Lord's people, how the enemy stirreth up the minds of men, to wait for their halting. An infirmity of the Lord's people, becomes subject of delight to carnal minds. *Aha! Aha! so would we have it.* This is the language of all the haters of Christ's people. Psalm xxxv. 20, 21. The glory given to the Lord, in the close of this paragraph, is beautiful: and no less so the hymn of praise with which it ends.

14 ¶ Cursed *be* the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me, be blessed.

15 Cursed *be* the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man child is born unto thee, making him very glad.

16 And let that man be as the cities which the LORD overthrew, and repented not: and let him hear the cry in the morning, and the shouting at noon-tide:

17 Because he slew me not from the womb; or that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb *to be* always great *with me*.

18 Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?

So great a contrast there is between the last verse of the preceding paragraph and the beginning of this, that I cannot but suppose the Prophet is not speaking these things of himself. And I the rather am inclined to suppose this from the great sameness that there is in the words here spoken, to what we meet with in Job's complaint: so

as that one might conclude the Prophet quoted them from Job. See Job, iii. 3, &c. The Reader will remember, that I do not decide upon it, I refer him to the passage. But if the Prophet, like the Patriarch, uttered this vehement lamentation, we only learn from both, what a compound of grace and corruption there is in the best of men as men: It is thou only blessed Jesus, of whom it can be said, there was *no guile found in thy lips*; but as *a lamb before her shearers is dumb, so thou openedst not thy mouth.* 1 Pet. ii. 22, 23.

REFLECTIONS.

OH! *Pashur!* what a vast difference was there even in the moment of thy seeming triumphs, between the suffering Prophet, and the insulting Governor? And what an everlasting and eternal difference was there when his predictions were fulfilled, and thou wert a terror, a *magor-missabib* to thyself and all around thee! And what is it now? Reader think of that striking passage of the Prophet, and learn from it all that it contains; *Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him! Woe unto the wicked it shall be ill with him!*

Precious Lord Jesus! how can I hear or read of the reproaches thrown upon thy faithful servants in every age of thy Church, without having my mind insensibly directed to thee, to behold all the lesser exercises of thy prophets, swallowed up in the floods (as the streams of the earth in the vast ocean) of these unequalled sorrows. *Was ever sorrow like unto thy sorrow, in the day of the Lord's fierce anger?* Here in thee may my soul always find sweet consolation, and under the taunts and reproaches of the world, recollect, that *if they called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they those of his household.* Grant Lord! that I may never murmur at any of thy dispensations, nor lament the day of my birth, or wish it to have been covered in darkness: but rather desire to be conformed to thy blessed image in all things, that being made partaker of the sufferings of Christ, *I may be also of the glory that shall follow.*

CHAP. XXI.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter refers to a period in the reign of Zedekiah. The King felt alarmed at the prospect of the king of Babylon's army, and sends to enquire of Jeremiah concerning the event. The Prophet sends back a heavy answer of evil tidings.

THE word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, when king Zedekiah sent unto him Pashur the son of Melchiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, saying,

2 Enquire, I pray thee, of the LORD for us (for Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon maketh war against us) if so be that the LORD will deal with

us according to all his wondrous works that he may go up from us.

It should seem from the parallel history of Zedekiah, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 11, 12. that there was no sincerity in this enquiry: and what good could therefore be expected from it. Alas! how is it that men draw nigh to God with their mouth, and honour him with their lips, while their hearts are far from him?

3 ¶ Then said Jeremiah unto them, Thus shall ye say to Zedekiah:

4 Thus saith the LORD God of Israel; Behold I will turn back the weapons of war that *are* in your hands, wherewith ye fight against the king of Babylon, and *against* the Chaldeans which besiege you without the walls, and I will assemble them into the midst of this city.

5 And I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand, and with a strong arm, even in anger, and in fury, and in great wrath.

6 And I will smite the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast: they shall die of a great pestilence.

7 And afterward, saith the LORD, I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, and his servants, and the people, and such as are left in this city from the pestilence, from the sword, and from the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of their enemies: and into the hand of those that seek their life: and he shall smite them with the edge of the sword; he shall not spare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy.

The Lord's answer by the Prophet is such as one might expect, most alarming and awful! Reader! how blessed is it to know the Lord, in order to a proper confidence in him. Sweet is that promise to this amount, Isaiah, xxxii. 1, 2.

8 And unto this people thou shalt say, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death.

9 He that abideth in this city shall die by the

sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence : but he that goeth out, and falleth to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey.

10 For I have set my face against this city for evil, and not for good, saith the LORD : it shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire.

As with the priest, so with the people was the prediction of the prophet ; see Isaiah, xxiv. 1, 2, 3. And what an awful state is that nation in, where corruption is universal ?

11 And touching the house of the king of Judah, say, Hear ye the word of the LORD :

12 O house of David, thus saith the LORD ; Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver *him that is* spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench *it*, because of the evil of your doings.

13 Behold, I *am* against thee : O inhabitant of the valley, *and* rock of the plain, saith the LORD ; which say, Who shall come down against us ? or who shall enter into our habitations ?

14 But I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings, saith the LORD : and I will kindle a fire in the forest thereof, and it shall devour all things round about it.

It was the glory of Jerusalem, and for which the Prophet boasted, that she should be a quiet habitation, whose tabernacle should not be taken down, nor one of her stakes removed. But this was because her glorious Lord would be unto her a place of broad rivers and streams ; so that no enemy could approach while her Lord was in the midst of his Zion for a defence. Isaiah, xxxiii. 20, 21, 22. But if the Lord withdraws : if the Lord give her up, who can protect her ! Reader ! see to it, that Jesus is your glory, and he will be for a defence. Isaiah, viii. 12, 13, 14.

REFLECTIONS.

READER ! let you and I learn from the perusal of this Chapter, how needful it must be in times of trouble to have first learnt, and to have known the Lord in times of safety. What a sad state was

Zedekiah and his army in when the King of Babylon's army made war against them. But what a more awful and tremendous state is that man in, when death draweth near, and the Lord is departed from him! Oh! Reader! think, and let the thought never be parted with, until grace hath followed it up to the means of safety in Christ! how truly overwhelmed with sorrow must every man be in by nature, whose conscience then condemns, and there is no whisper of Jesus to speak peace? There is no discharge in that war!

Lamb of God! oh by every endearing name let me adjure thee to be thyself the safety to all thy redeemed, in thy blood and righteousness! Lord! when a more formidable foe, than even the *Chaldean* army, comes up upon this people, and there is no way in man to escape; do thou take up our person and our cause, and deliver for thy name's sake, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies! Amen.

CHAP. XXII.

CONTENTS.

In this Chapter the Prophet is calling to repentance. Heavy sentences of judgment are pronounced upon Shallum and Coniah.

THUS saith the LORD; Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and speak there this word,

2 And say, Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David, thou, and thy servants, and thy people that enter in by these gates:

3 Thus saith the LORD; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor; and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place.

4 For if ye do this thing indeed, then shall there enter in by the gates of this house kings sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, he, and his servants, and his people.

5 But if ye will not hear these words, I swear by myself, saith the LORD, that this house shall become a desolation.

In the preceding Chapter messengers from the King, were sent to the Prophet, to know the Lord's will concerning his people. In this, the prophet is sent with a message to the King, and with promises of a most gracious nature, to assure both him and his people, both of peace and prosperity, if they were found obedient to the Lord. But in point of failure, very heavy denunciations are given: and to confirm them, the Lord swears by himself, since he could swear by no greater, that his purposes shall stand: and desolation should follow. Heb. vi. 13.

6 For thus saith the LORD unto the king's house of Judah; Thou *art* Gilead unto me, *and* the head of Lebanon; *yet* surely I will make thee a wilderness, *and* cities *which* are not inhabited.

7 And I will prepare destroyers against thee, every one with his weapons; and they shall cut down thy choice cedars, and cast *them* into the fire.

8 And many nations shall pass by this city, and they shall say every man to his neighbour, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this great city?

9 Then they shall answer; Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God, and worshipped other Gods, and served them.

Nothing can be more tender and endearing on the part of God, to shew his reluctancy to punish. Comparing his city, and his people, to *Gilead*, and *Lebanon*, are striking expressions. *Gilead* and *Lebanon* were very lovely and flourishing: but the most lovely places, if brought under God's displeasure, soon become a wilderness. Reader! think what a *Gilead* and *Lebanon* was our nature before sin marred it. Oh! what a desolation by sin! The world, the Lord saith, shall look with astonishment, on the change wrought on his people and city: *is this Zion whom no man regardeth?* Precious Lord Jesus, what an eternal state of ruin to our nature must have taken place, hadst thou not interposed for our recovery, by the sacrifice of thyself! Reader! who would believe the possibility of Israel changing their glory, had not scripture declared it, and for the love and reverence of Jehovah, have given their affection to dunghill idols?

10 ¶ Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him: *but* weep sore for him that goeth away; for he shall return no more, nor see his native country.

11 For thus saith the LORD touching Shallum the son of Josiah king of Judah, which reigned

instead of Josiah his father, which went forth out of this place : He shall not return thither any more :

12 But he shall die in the place whither they have led him captive, and shall see this land no more.

It is probable that this *Shallum* is the same person as is elsewhere in the scripture called *Jehoahaz* : See 2 Kings, xxiii. 30. In the 1 Chronicles, Cháp. iii. 15. we have the name of *Shallum* instead of *Jehoahaz* : so that it is likely that he was known by both names. The Lord's command, not to weep for one prince, but sorely for another, forms a different view, in what sense the death of the righteous and of the wicked are considered in the sight of God. Rev. xiv. 13. Psalm cxvi. 15.

13 Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong ; *that* useth his neighbours service without wages, and giveth him not for his work ;

14 That saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows ; and *it is* ceiled with cedar, and painted with vermilion.

15 Shalt thou reign because thou closest *thyself* in cedar ? did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, *and* then *it was* well with him ?

16 He judged the cause of the poor and needy : then *it was* well *with him* : *was* not this to know me ? saith the LORD.

17 But thine eyes and thine heart *are* not but for thy covetousness ; and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence to do *it*.

18 Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah ; They shall not lament for him, *saying*, Ah my brother ! or, Ah sister ! they shall not lament for him, *saying*, Ah lord ! or Ah his glory !

19 He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.

What a solemn woe, this short but pointed sermon begins with: and what an awful close is made of it, in the application to the king. Is it not astonishing, that any Preacher, and at such a time, should have manifested such faithfulness, as to tell the king, that his burial should be the burial of an Ass? And is it not equally astonishing that the Preacher should have been so suffered? How is it to be explained? Surely by no other but the over-ruling power of God. Look back to Jeremiah's ordination and commission, this will explain it, Jeremiah, i. 17, 18, 19.

20 Go up to Lebanon, and cry; and lift up thy voice in Bashan, and cry from the passages; for all thy lovers are destroyed.

21 I spake unto thee in thy prosperity; *but* thou saidst, I will not hear. This *hath* been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedst not my voice.

22 The wind shall eat up all thy pastors, and thy lovers shall go into captivity; surely then shalt thou be ashamed and confounded for all thy wickedness.

23 O inhabitant of Lebanon, that makest thy nest in the cedars, how gracious shalt thou be when pangs come upon thee, and pain as of a woman in travail?

24 *As I* live saith the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon thy right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence;

25 And I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand of *them* whose face thou fearest, even into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans.

26 And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bare thee, into another country, where ye were not born? and there shall ye die.

27 But to the land whereunto they desire to return, thither shall they not return.

28 *Is* this man Coniah a despised broken idol?

is he a vessel wherein *is* no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not?

We have here a similar prediction against *Coniah*: and a very awful one it is. He is to be made a captive, and to die in a foreign land, even in a land of all others he most dreaded and hated. And what sums up the finishing stroke of his misery. He is to be forsaken of the Lord. Some have thought, that as we do not read of any *Coniah*, among the Kings: but *Jeconiah* the son of *Jehoiakim*; that the alteration of his name was to shew the Lord's displeasure. See 2 Kings, xxiv. 8. which in the margin of our old Bibles, makes it *Jeconiah*, see 1 Chron. iii. 16. And the striking off the *Jah*, they say, was a confirmation of this displeasure; as the addition to Abram's name on the contrary, was intended as a token of divine favour. Gen. xvii. 5.

29 O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD.

39 Thus saith the LORD: Write ye this man childless, a man *that* shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.

What a solemn and awful cry is this to the earth, and thrice repeated! There seems to be more in it than perhaps we can fully explain. Giving a personality to the earth, and the hearing ear, which the nation possessed of God's laws had lost, is indeed a most tremendous judgment, and the most finished proof of our fallen estate. Oh! for the heavens and the earth to hear also that the Lord hath visited his people, and had mercy on his chosen.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! Who can go through a Chapter of such contents as this unmoved! Who, but for God's authority, in his holy word, confirming the melancholy truth, could have believed, that a nation so highly favoured as Israel, should have sunk so foully. But look we within, and there read the same, sad pages of the human heart. *Are we better than they?* Solemn question of the Apostle. And as sad an answer. *No! in no wise: for he hath concluded all under sin!* Blessed Lord Jesus! was it indeed necessary that thy people should be thus taught in Israel's history, what they also are by nature and by practice? Hath God the Holy Ghost held up in them a faithful mirror, to shew what all men are? And must thy people, still look and still learn by way of keeping up remembrance, that such once were we: but we are *washed and sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.* Help Lord then all thy people, to see and know more and more that in themselves

they are all as despised idols, as broken vessels, wherein is no water! And if now they are renewed, and made as *Gilead*, and as *Lebanon* to thee: it is thou Lord that art the sole cause of their recovery. Oh! precious Jesus, how increasingly precious art thou to thy people, who see their need of thee more and more, and are desirous of living to thee here by faith, that ere long they may live in thee, and by thee, in glory to all eternity. Amen.

C H A P. XXIII.

CONTENTS.

We have in this Chapter a blessed and gracious word of comfort succeeding the awful message, in the preceding Chapter. And what tends to make this Chapter most eminently blessed to the Church is, the glorious account given in it under the spirit of prophecy of the Lord Jesus Christ.

WOE be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD.

2 Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock and driven them away, and have not visited them; behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD.

3 And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.

4 And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD.

It is blessed to observe, how from the unworthiness of man the Lord takes occasion to magnify the riches of his grace. Not that our misery is the cause of divine mercy: for his love was long before we had any sense of our need of it, or even our being: but, though the love of Jehovah from all eternity was the source and spring of all our blessings; yet even our worthlessness, the Lord takes occasion from, to introduce yet more striking marks of his grace and goodness. Thus as in this Chapter, Foolish and destructive pastors make way for the Lord's faithful One: and because man cannot, the Lord himself will, both gather and feed his sheep from all places, whither they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day! Ezek. xxxiv. 10, 11, 12. Oh! grace divine: mercy unequalled!

5 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

6 In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Here are two verses, which contain an epitome of the whole Bible: Christ and his offices; Christ and his work; Christ and his character: all that refers to his glorious Person and finished salvation, is implied in what is here said. The passage opens with a *behold!* regard, take notice, as a thing of immense consequence: and of immense consequence indeed it is. The *day* here spoken of, is as similar to all the other like phrases in the Prophet, the gospel day, the day of salvation. Jesus, under the similitude of a *Branch* is pointed at, and most divinely proclaimed. Several of the Prophets described Christ by this same representation. Isaiah, iv. 2. Zech. iii. 8. and vi. 12. And in express allusion to the house of David, from whom Christ after the flesh was to arise, the Prophet described him, Isaiah, xi. 1, 2. How plainly these representations, refer to the Lord Jesus, and in him were completed, and in no other the beloved Apostle shews, Rev. xxii. 16. His royal office is also strongly spoken of. And how fully is Christ shewn to be King in Zion, King of Nations, King of Saints; the Church's head and husband, the smallest reference to the scriptures will prove. Psalm ii. 6. Ephes. i. 20, 21, &c. Rev. xix. 16. And what a volume of blessings and mercies are summed up all in one, in that comprehensive account the Prophet gives of the properties of his royal grace and power. Both Israel and Judah, both Jew and Gentile, shall be alike interested in his salvation. His name shall be the full redemption of his people: And this, not only from what he is in himself, and in his own glorious and Almighty character, but, in the relationship in which he hath put himself to his people, and in which by grace they stand in him. Jehovah in himself eternal; and Jehovah perfect righteousness, and Jehovah *our* righteousness. For what he is, he is to them, and for them, and his righteousness, by virtue of this union with him is to all intents and purposes theirs; for he is made of God to them all these, *wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*; so that they stand in the sight of God, one with him, and as a part of himself. And Jehovah declares, that this shall not only be the case; but that the people shall know it, and proclaim it, as those who rejoice in it, and take delight: they shall call him so: and live in the enjoyment of it. Was there ever any thing more blessed, or ever any thing more gracious. Reader! if our hearts take no interest in this most precious scripture, they must be cold indeed!

7 Therefore behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD

liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

8 But, the LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.

In consequence of this great salvation, when the Lord Jesus is come, and hath fully finished it, the former deliverance from Egypt, which was but a type of it, shall then be done away, as the shadow is lost in the substance. Both the deliverance of the Church from Egypt, and the deliverance from Babylon were types of Jesus's deliverance from worse than Egyptian and Babylonian bondage. They were temporary, but this an eternal freedom. In allusion to this the Church is represented as singing, Rev. xviii. 2, &c.

9 ¶ Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the LORD, and because of the words of his holiness.

10 For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourneth; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, and their course is evil, and their force is not right.

11 For both prophet and priest are profane: yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the LORD.

12 Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness; they shall be driven on, and fall therein: for I will bring evil upon them, even the year of their visitation, saith the LORD.

13 And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria: they prophesied in Baal, and caused my people Israel to err.

14 I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evil-doers, that none doth return from his wicked-

ness : they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah.

The Prophet is here representing the horrible state of false prophets, and the awful termination of such conduct. A portion suited not only to the days of Jeremiah, but to all ages of the Church. Lord ! give grace to all concerned to attend to it.

15 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets ; Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall ; for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land.

16 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you : they make you vain : they speak a vision of their own heart, *and* not out of the mouth of the LORD.

17 They say still unto them that despise me, the LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace : and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you.

18 For who hath stood in the counsel of the LORD, and hath perceived and heard his word ? who hath marked his word and heard *it* ?

19 Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind : it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked.

20 The anger of the LORD shall not return until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart : in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly.

21 I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran : I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.

22 But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.

23 *Am* I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off?

24 Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD, do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.

25 I have heard what the prophets said that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed.

26 How long shall *this* be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, *they are* prophets of the deceit of their own heart:

27 Which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal.

28 The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully; What *is* the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD.

29 *Is* not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer *that* breaketh the rock in pieces?

30 Therefore behold, I *am* against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbour.

31 Behold, I *am* against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith.

32 Behold, I *am* against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness, yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore, they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD.

33 And when this people, or the prophet, or a priest shall ask thee, saying, What *is* the burden of the LORD? Thou shalt then say unto them, What burden? I will even forsake you, saith the LORD.

34 And *as for* the prophet and the priest, and the people that shall say, The burden of the LORD, I will even punish that man and his house.

35 Thus shall ye say every one to his neighbour, and every one to his brother, What hath the LORD answered? and What hath the LORD spoken?

36 And the burden of the LORD shall ye mention no more: for every man's word shall be his burden: for ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the LORD of hosts our God.

37 Thus shalt thou say to the prophet, What hath the LORD answered thee? and, What hath the LORD spoken?

38 But since ye say, the burden of the LORD; therefore thus saith the LORD, Because ye say this word, The burden of the LORD; and I have sent unto you, saying, Ye shall not say, The burden of the LORD;

39 Therefore behold, I, even I, will utterly forget you, and I will forsake you, and the city that I gave you and your fathers, *and cast you out of my presence*:

40 And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.

At the opening of this passage, we have the Lord's sentence upon them, and an awful one it is. Wormwood and gall are strong figures to set forth the awful bitterness in the close of such a life! Prophets not sent, not commissioned, and who utter lies among God's people; what can be more awful. But the Lord hath marked out a right method of judgment, for such as hear them. As pure wheat is discoverable from chaff, so the pure doctrine of the cross is discoverable from the vain doctrine of the pride of men. The Father's love in redemption, and the Son's grace in the accomplishment of it, when taught the soul by God the Holy Ghost, will prove, that this word is as fire, and as the hammer, both to break and to inflame, the souls of the hearers, with the truth of salvation. And though faithful Preachers, who call upon their people to attend to these things, may be made the jest and the sneer of the Infidel, concerning the burden of the Lord: yet, such only mock to their own confusion, and bring upon themselves swift destruction!

REFLECTIONS.

READER! while this Chapter in the awful close of it, holds forth most powerful instructions concerning true and false teachers in the Church of God; and which are in themselves enough to call forth the most awakened attention to all that are concerned in the ministry of God's word: let us pray over this part with earnestness, that the Lord may commission what is here said to their solemn conviction. But let you and I dwell with delight on the former part of this most blessed Chapter, in which we find so much said, and so blessedly said, concerning Him, who is the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Let us look stedfastly and steadily to him, who comes home thus recommended to us, under this endearing character, and let us not lose sight of Him, until that we have so looked, and so loved, and so believed, unto salvation, as to know, that he is indeed the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Reader! You and I cannot but know, that we both need a righteousness: for *without holiness no man can see the Lord*. And as we have not this holiness in ourselves, it is high time that we should seek it in another. And this righteousness is no where to be found but in Christ. Now if you and I are taught, savingly taught of God the Holy Ghost, who Christ is, and what he hath wrought, that *he who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*; then shall we indeed know Him, and call Him, by this glorious name, the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Let us beg of God the SPIRIT, to be our teacher, and to bring home Christ to our hearts in all his loveliness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency. Let us seek with earnestness that unspeakable blessing, to know that *He is made of God to us wisdom, and righteousness; sanctification and redemption, that all our glorying may be in the Lord*. Then shall we have that blessed soul experience, which is spoken of by the Prophet, and both our life and conversation will be the same, *Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength; even to him shall men come; and all that believe in him shall never be ashamed nor confounded, world without end*. Amen.

CHAP. XXIV.

CONTENTS.

Under the similitude of good and bad figs, the Lord sheweth the state of his faithful people, and the sad end of the godly.

THE LORD, shewed me, and behold, two baskets of figs were set before the temple of the LORD, after that Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, and the princes of Judah, with the carpenters and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon.

2 One basket *had* very good figs, *even* like the figs *that are* first ripe ; and the other basket *had* very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad.

3 Then said the LORD unto me, What seest thou, Jeremiah? and I said, Figs ; the good figs, very good : and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil.

The date of this part of Jeremiah's prophecy is given, perhaps with a view, that the reference made in it might be the stronger. Many of the people were at this time in Babylon, carried away in the captivity of *Jeconiah*. And it should seem, that these were among the most zealous and faithful of the people. The Prophets *Ezekiel* and *Daniel* were at this time in *Babylon* with many of the princes. If we consult the first Chapter of *Ezekiel*, verses 2, 3. and the first of *Daniel*, verse 6, we shall find it so, as appears by the date mentioned.

4 Again, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

5 Thus saith the LORD the God of Israel, Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this placc into the land of the Chaldeans for *their* good.

6. For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land : and I will build them, and not pull *them* down ; and I will plant them, and not pluck *them* up.

7 And I will give them an heart to know me, that I *am* the LORD : and they shall be my people, and I will be their God : for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.

¶ 8 And as the evil figs, which cannot be eaten, they are so evil : surely thus saith the LORD : So will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah and his princes, and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt :

9 And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for *their* hurt, to be

a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse in all places whither I shall drive them.

10 And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers.

Here the Lord himself becomes the Preacher to the Prophet, and explains. The bad figs, represented Zedekiah and his court, still in the land, but against whom, the Lord would in his own appointed time bring the army from Babylon. And the good figs, referred to the Lord's faithful ones, now in captivity. Reader! it is blessed to mark the final issue of all things. *Tell ye the righteous it shall be well with him. Say ye to the wicked it shall be ill with him.* Isaiah, iii. 10, 11. But while this is and must be the comfort and consolation of the redeemed; they cannot but feel concern at general calamities, and take part with the sorrows of desolation. That is a sweet promise of the Lord, on this account, Zeph. iii. 18.

REFLECTIONS.

I BEG the Reader to make due reflections on the contents of this short but most interesting Chapter, and he will find cause in making application of what is here said, in reference to the times of the Church then in being, to see how much the people of God are concerned at all times to consider the same doctrine. Both upon a civil, and upon a religious account; times of national distress, are times of great concern. If the good figs as well as the bad figs were to be carried away, we learn from it, that in outward things there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked. Like passengers in a vessel, if the ship founders, all on board partake of the same. And though God's people are preserved from eternal shipwreck by grace; yet in temporal concerns, the Lord saith, *I will draw forth my sword out of his sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked.* Reader! let us pray for grace, to take part in all the national afflictions of our land, and to sympathize with all the sorrows of the people. But while we do this, let us look up and bless that gracious God, who hath placed our spiritual concerns out of the reach of danger. Precious Jesus, in thy hands, all the concerns of thy people, both their persons and their interests are eternally secure. Blessed, for ever blessed be God for Jesus Christ.

CHAP. XXV.

CONTENTS.

The Prophet is here preaching to the people, and in the usual strain of reproof. But in the midst of threatening he is commissioned to introduce a gracious promise, that the captivity shall not exceed the seventy years before pointed out.

THE word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that *was* the first year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon;

2 The which Jeremiah the prophet spake unto all the people of Judah, and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying,

3 From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, even unto this day, that *is* the three and twentieth year, the word of the LORD hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye have not hearkened.

4 And the LORD hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending *them*; but ye have not hearkened nor inclined your ear to hear.

5 They said, Turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land that the LORD hath given unto you and to your fathers for ever and ever.

6 And go not after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, and provoke me not to anger with the works of your hands, and I will do you no hurt.

7 Yet ye have not hearkened unto me, saith the LORD, that ye might provoke me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt.

Both the time when, and the manner how, and the subject of, the Prophet's sermon are here set down, with the sad event of the whole, in that no man regarded. Neither *Jeremiah*, nor the Prophets had the least avail in all their preaching. Reader, do not however overlook the plan of their preaching. It was in the morning early, and no doubt in the evening also. But alas! three and twenty years, or three and twenty thousand, had it been possible, until God gives the hearing ear, will prove alike unavailing. I cannot close our review of this passage, until that I have first requested the Reader to turn to the gospel, and read our Lord's parable to the same purport,

Luke, xiii. 6—9. Oh! precious Jesus! who shall say to what extent is thy gracious intercession, and how much we owe to it!

8 ¶ Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Because ye have not heard my words,

9 Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations.

10 Moreover, I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle.

11 And this whole land shall be a desolation *and* an astonishment: and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

I pray the Reader to observe, how the King of Babylon is called the Lord's servant. Yes! for the Lord will serve himself of his enemies, when the purposes of his sacred will, render it necessary. In this sense, the King of Babylon is Jehovah's servant, but, like *Cyrus*, knew not the Lord. See Isaiah, xlv. 4.

12 ¶ And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, *that* I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans; and will make it perpetual desolations.

13 And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, *even* all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations.

14 For many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of them also: and I will recompense them according to their deeds, and according to the works of their own hands.

Here is a gracious promise, (and which was most faithfully fulfilled in the season) given with a view to support the minds of the faithful, during their long captivity. I pray the Reader to mark it down, and not overlook it, in order to keep in remembrance the long-suffering of God. And I beg of him also, at the same time to keep as steadily in remembrance the cause, even God's covenant. See Daniel, ix. 1, 2. Psalm lxxxix. 30—35.

15 For thus saith the LORD God of Israel unto me; Take the wine cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations to whom I send thee to drink it.

16 And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them.

17 Then took I the cup at the LORD's hand, and made all the nations to drink, unto whom the LORD had sent me :

18 *To wit*, Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, and the kings thereof, and the princes thereof, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, an hissing, and a curse : as *it is* this day ;

19 Pharaoh king of Egypt, and his servants, and his princes, and all his people ;

20 And all the mingled people, and all the kings of the land of Uz, and all the kings of the land of the Philistines, and Ashkelon, and Azzar, and Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod.

21 Edom and Moab, and the children of Ammon,

22 And all the kings of Tyrus, and all the kings of Zidon, and the kings of the isles which *are* beyond the sea,

23 Dedan, and Tema, and Buz, and all *that are* in the utmost corners,

24 And all the kings of Arabia, and all the kings of the mingled people that dwell in the desert,

25 And all the kings of Zimri, and all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of the Medes.

26 And all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another, and all the kingdoms of the world, which *are* upon the face of the earth : and the king of Sheshach shall drink after them.

27 Therefore thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel ; Drink ye, and be drunken, and spue, and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword, which I will send among you.

28 And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thine hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts ; Ye shall certainly drink.

29 For lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished ? ye shall not be unpunished : for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the LORD of hosts.

30 Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, The LORD shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation ; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation ; he shall give a shout as they that tread *the grapes*, against all the inhabitants of the earth.

31 A noise shall come *even* to the ends of the earth : for the LORD hath a controversy with the nations ; he will plead with all flesh ; he will give them *that* are wicked to the sword, saith the LORD.

This scripture can need no other comment, than what is contained in the book of the Revelations, Chap. xiv. 10. By Jeremiah's taking the cup, and making all these nations drink of it, is meant, making them to hear and know that the wrath of God is coming upon them. The Lord had indeed been chastizing his children : but when that was accomplished, the rod should be burnt or destroyed.

32 Thus saith the LORD of hosts ; Behold evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth.

33 And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from *one* end of the earth even unto the *other* end of the earth : they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried : they shall be dung upon the ground.

34 Howl, ye shepherds, and cry ; and wallow yourselves *in the ashes*, ye principal of the flock : for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersions are accomplished ; and ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel.

35 And the shepherds shall have no way to flee, nor the principal of the flock to escape.

36 A voice of the cry of the shepherds, and an howling of the principal of the flock *shall be heard* : for the LORD hath spoiled their pasture.

37 And the peaceable habitations are cut down, because of the fierce anger of the LORD.

38 He hath forsaken his covert, as the lion : for their land is desolate, because of the fierceness of the oppressor, and because of his fierce anger.

In these verses is described, the sad consequence of divine judgments. The King of Babylon and his confederates, may seemingly for a time triumph : but their end shall be, like Moab of old, to perish for ever. Numbers, xxiv. 24. Rev. xviii. 4—10.

REFLECTIONS.

DEAREST Lord Jesus ! who can read the sad requital thy faithful servants met with in all ages of the Church, when rising early and speaking to the people, without calling to mind the awful state of the Jews rejecting thee, the Lord of life and glory, when thou camest to thine own, and thine own received thee not. How did Jerusalem, the holy city, kill thy prophets, and despise thy word, when thou wouldest have gathered her people, as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and they would not. And yet, blessed Lord, thy patience was not exhausted, neither thy love given over, for in the moment of thy departure, when giving thy farewell commission to thy disciples, to go into all the world, and to preach the gospel to every creature, the charter of grace still ran the same, *beginning at Jerusalem*. Oh ! for grace always to keep in remembrance, that love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

And Lord, I pray thee, that I may always preserve alive through thine Holy Spirit in me the remembrance of thy grace to thy Church, during the seventy years captivity : and the sure fulfilment

of thy Covenant promise, in bringing thy people from it. Even so Lord now, all thy promises, and all thine engagements are the same, and like the great Author and Finisher of salvation, they remain eternally and unchangeably the same, yesterday, and to day, and for ever. God be blessed and adored in all his faithfulness, and truth, made to a thousand generations: and before ever blessed in all his redeemed, and their enjoyment of them, from henceforth and for ever. Amen.

CHAP. XXVI.

CONTENTS.

The Prophet Jeremiah continuing still to prophesy, so irritated the carnal Jews, that they arose against him to put him to death, but the Lord delivered him. In this Chapter this history is related.

IN the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, came this word from the LORD, saying,

2 Thus saith the LORD; Stand in the court of the LORD's house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the LORD's house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word:

3 If so be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil which I purpose to do unto them because of the evil of their doings.

4 And thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD; If ye will not hearken to me to walk in my law which I have set before you.

5 To hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you, both rising up early, and sending *them*, but ye have not hearkened;

6 Then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth.

7 So the priests and the prophets, and all the people heard Jeremiah, speaking these words in the house of the LORD.

It is impossible to read the continued perseverance of the mournful Prophet, and to hear the sad subject of the peoples neglect of his preaching, but with much exercise and pain of the mind. Reader! is not the same part acted over again, against faithful ministers of the Lord, in the present hour? Are there not thousands who reject the counsel of God against their own souls, and both neglect and despise the Preacher, and his word, as much as those of old? What can be an higher proof of the fall of men? What afford a greater testimony of the ascendancy of Satan in the human mind by nature?

8 ¶ Now it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the LORD had commanded *him* to speak unto all the people, that the priests, and the prophets, and all the people took him, saying, Thou shalt surely die.

9 Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant? and all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.

10 ¶ When the princes of Judah heard these things, then they came up from the king's house unto the house of the LORD, and sat down in the entry of the new gate of the LORD's *house*.

11 Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes, and to all the people, saying, This man *is* worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears.

12 ¶ Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying, The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard.

13 Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you.

14 As for me, behold, I *am* in your hand; do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you.

15 But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon

the inhabitants thereof: for of a truth the LORD hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears.

Is there any thing new or wonderful in this? What servant, what Prophet, what Apostle, eminent in their Lord's service, but hath been brought into the same situation. Nay, what was the Lord himself, when witnessing before Pontius Pilate a good confession, but the same. Oh! how blessed to be a witness for the testimony of Jesus!

16 ¶ Then said the princes and all the people unto the priests and to the prophets; This man is not worthy to die; for he hath spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God.

17 Then rose up certain of the elders of the land, and spake to all the assembly of the people, saying,

18 Micah, the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spake to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Zion shall be plowed *like* a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest.

19 Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death? did he not fear the LORD, and besought the LORD, and the LORD repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them? thus might we procure great evil against our souls.

20 And there was also a man that prophesied in the name of the LORD, Urijah the son of Shemaiah, of Kirjath-jearim, who prophesied against this city and against this land according to all the words of Jeremiah:

21 And when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men, and all the princes heard his words, the king sought to put him to death: but when Urijah heard it, he was afraid, and fled, and went into Egypt.

22 And Jehoiakim the king sent men into

Egypt, *namely*, Elnathan the son of Achbor, and *certain* men with him into Egypt.

23 And they fetched forth Urijah out of Egypt, and brought him unto Jehoiakim the king: who slew him with the sword, and cast his dead body into the graves of the common people.

24 Nevertheless, the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death.

I pray the Reader to observe with me, who were the enemies of faithful *Jeremiah*: namely, the unfaithful priests. Oh! what a reproach is it to any age, and to every age of the Church, that the Redeemer should be wounded in the house of his friends, and that those, who profess his name, should be the first to persecute his people. Reader! do not overlook, that *Jeremiah* was not singular in his services. *Micah* in his days, and *Urijah* in his, were both brought into danger, for being found faithful. That must be a most accommodating, time-serving, and worldly spirit, which chimes in with the wishes of the people, in speaking smooth things and prophesying deceits. The resolution of Paul will bring upon every preacher his odium. To preach Christ crucified and Christ glorified, is to provoke hell. The offence of the cross hath never ceased, and never will. Oh! for faithful ministers, to do as *Jeremiah* did, and leave the event with the Lord. 1 Cor. ii. 2.

REFLECTIONS.

YE ministers of the Lord Jesus! here learn from *Jeremiah* the blessedness of being found faithful. Solemnly enlisted under the banner of Christ, plead his cause, and fight his battle, with an ungodly world, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear. And as the Lord hath said, *fear ye not the reproaches of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings: for the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but your Lord's righteousness shall be for ever, and his salvation from generation to generation.*

And oh! thou Almighty Lord of thy servants! do thou stand by them, and help them; give them to see and know, that it is thy cause they plead, and that thou art engaged for their defence. Make them a sweet savour of thyself unto God and the Father; and though a gazing stock, and a proverb of derision to the world, do thou own and bless their labours to the conversion of sinners, and the comforting of saints; that when thou, the Great Shepherd of thy fold shall appear, they may rejoice before thee at thy coming, and receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

C H A P. XXVII.

CONTENTS.

Jeremiah in this Chapter is addressing the other nations around, at the command of God, to tell them of their shortly being subject to the King of Babylon. Towards the close of the Chapter, the Prophet admonisheth the King of Judah to the same.

IN the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah came this word unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

2 Thus saith the LORD to me ; Make thee bonds and yokes, and put them upon thy neck,

3 And send them to the king of Edom, and to the king of Moab, and to the king of the Ammonites, and to the king of Tyrus, and to the king of Zidon, by the hand of the messengers which come to Jerusalem unto Zedekiah king of Judah ;

4 And command them to say unto their masters, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Thus shall ye say unto your masters ;

5 I have made the earth, the man, and the beast that *are* upon the ground, by my great power, and by my out-stretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me.

6 And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant ; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him.

7 And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come : and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him.

8 And it shall come to pass, *that* the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the LORD, with the sword, and with the famine, and

with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand.

The time of this prophecy is noted, but it should seem, that though the word of the Lord came to *Jeremiah* then, he did not deliver it till a considerable space after, for *Jehoiakim's* reign at the beginning, was many years before *Zedekiah*. But the doctrine is the same. Let the Reader observe from what is here said, how the Lord governeth all nations: and that it is *by him Kings reign; and princes decree justice*. Sweet and consolatory thought to the believer in Jesus! Prov. viii. 15.

9 Therefore hearken not ye to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers, which speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon.

10 For they prophesy a lie unto you, to remove you far from your land; and that I should drive you out, and ye should perish.

11 But the nations that bring their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him, those will I let remain still in their own land, saith the LORD: and they shall till it, and dwell therein.

I only detain the Reader on these verses, to remark, how in all ages, the Church of God hath been infested by false prophets. With what caution ought men to hear!

12 I spake also to *Zedekiah* king of Judah according to all these words, saying, Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live.

13 Why will ye die, thou and thy people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, as the LORD hath spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon?

14 Therefore hearken not unto the words of the prophets that speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon: for they prophesy a lie unto you.

15 For I have not sent them, saith the LORD, yet they prophesy a lie in my name, that I might

drive you out, and that ye might perish, ye, and the prophets that prophesy unto you.

This must have been a painful service to Jeremiah, to go from one to another, and with messages of evil. All God's servants have done the same. Ezek. ii. 3-6.

16 Also I spake to the priests, and to all this people, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hearken not to the words of your prophets that prophesy unto you, saying, Behold the vessels of the LORD's house shall now shortly be brought again from Babylon: for they prophesy a lie unto you.

17 Hearken not unto them, serve the king of Babylon, and live: wherefore should this city be laid waste?

18 But if they *be* prophets, and if the word of the LORD be with them, let them now make intercession to the LORD of hosts, that the vessels which are left in the house of the LORD, and in the house of the king of Judah, and at Jerusalem, go not to Babylon.

19 ¶ For thus saith the LORD of hosts concerning the pillars, and concerning the sea, and concerning the bases, and concerning the residue of the vessels that remain in this city.

20 Which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took not, when he carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, from Jerusalem to Babylon, and all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem:

21 Yea, thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning the vessels that remain in the house of the LORD, and in the house of the king of Judah and of Jerusalem,

22 They shall be carried to Babylon, and there shall they be until the day that I visit them, saith the LORD: then will I bring them up, and restore them to this place.

Both Prophets and Priests are deceived, and the Lord seems to have made his servant *Jeremiah* a wonder of truth in the midst of falsehood. Is it not so very often now? Are there not always those who speak smooth things, who prophecy deceits? Oh! for the Lord God of the Prophets to be the teacher of his people.

REFLECTIONS.

PAUSE Reader! and behold the wretched state of false prophets! for the wretched hire of this world's favour, and to please men, what will they not do. Though the Lord sent his faithful servant *Jeremiah*, both to the nations around and to Judah, with assurance that the King of Babylon should come, and take them away into captivity; yet allured by those false prophesiers of deceit, they were lulled to their ruin, and put off all consideration of the evil day, until the tremendous event came upon them. Pause Reader! and then ask, is it not too often the case now? Doth not the gospel of salvation uniformly denounce evil upon all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men! Are not we assured again and again, that *by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified in God's sight*: and that nothing but *the blood of Christ can cleanse from all sin*? How are these truths received by the great mass of men? Are they not considered by them as idle tales, and believed not? Oh! for grace, and the teachings of the Holy Spirit, to bring them home to the heart, and to rivet them on the mind. Blessed Jesus! take thy cause into thine own Almighty hand. Bring down every rebellious, every self-aspiring thought; and cause every knee to bow to thee, and to the sovereignty of thy power, until thou hast subdued the nations to the sceptre of thy grace, and made all confess, that *Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father*. Amen.

CHAP. XXVIII.

CONTENTS.

In the preceding Chapter the false prophets were generally spoken of, in their making the people to trust in lies. In this we have an example of one more impudent and bold than his fellows. The awful termination of his career is here recorded.

AND it came to pass the same year, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah, in the fourth year, and in the fifth month that Hananiah, the son of Azur the prophet, which was of Gibeon, spake unto me in the house of the LORD, in the presence of the priests, and of all the people, saying,

2 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, the God

of Israel, saying, I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon.

3 Within two full years will I bring again into this place all the vessels of the LORD's house, that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon took away from this place, and carried them to Babylon.

4 And I will bring again to this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, with all the captives of Judah that went into Babylon, saith the LORD; for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.

I hardly know any thing in scripture more striking, and what tends to interest the feelings of the Reader more sensibly, than this short but affecting Chapter. The Prophet Jeremiah knew himself to have been called to the Prophetic office from the womb. (See Chapter i.) But he had to contend with all the malice and contradiction of the world, as well as the powers of darkness all the way. We have here one of the sons of the Prophets publicly standing up to oppose and confront him. And that, not in a private insinuating manner; but in an open, bold, and avowed contradiction of all that Jeremiah had said. Let the Reader figure to himself the congregation of the people all assembled in the house of the Lord; and then behold the son of the Prophet Hananiah, standing up to disprove the whole of Jeremiah's preaching; and delivering the whole of what he professed to prophesy, in the name, and by the authority of the Lord. This will give him a lively idea of the subject of this Chapter.

5 ¶ Then the prophet Jeremiah said unto the prophet Hananiah, in the presence of the priests, and in the presence of all the people that stood in the house of the LORD,

6 Even the prophet Jeremiah said, Amen: the LORD do so: the LORD perform thy words which thou hast prophesied, to bring again the vessels of the LORD's house, and all that is carried away captive, from Babylon into this place.

7 Nevertheless, hear thou now this word that I speak in thine ears, and in the ears of all the people,

8 The prophets that have been before me, and before thee of old, prophesied both against many countries, and against great kingdoms, of war, and of evil, and of pestilence.

9 The prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, *then* shall the prophet be known, that the LORD hath truly sent him.

It is hardly possible to conceive, what were the feelings of Jeremiah upon this occasion. He could not indeed, but know in himself, that what Hananiah had said, must be false; but yet from the natural unbelief that is by nature in every man's heart, he might for the moment, be tempted to doubt, whether the Lord had not indeed sent Hananiah. Besides the heart of Jeremiah, as well as the hearts of all the people, naturally leaned to a wish, that what Hananiah had prophesied might prove true. So that under these circumstances, Jeremiah no doubt felt himself most dreadfully exercised. And as the false prophet Hananiah had very artfully referred the decision of his prophecy to two full years; of consequence, if the matter rested upon the event, before it could be determined, the minds of the people would not be enabled to discover, on which side the truth was, until the period had fully run out. Ministers of Jesus in the present hour, as well as the faithful Prophets of old, know what it is to be so exercised.

10 ¶ Then Hananiah the prophet took the yoke from off the prophet Jeremiah's neck, and brake it.

11 And Hananiah spake in the presence of all the people, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all nations within the space of two full years. And the prophet Jeremiah went his way.

What impudence do men proceed to, when hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Jeremiah had constantly worn a wooden yoke around his neck, as he walked up and down among the people, both to enforce the truths he preached, by type as well as by word. And Hananiah it is plain, considered the Prophet's yoke in this point of view. By breaking it therefore, and taking it from Jeremiah, he shewed the bitterness of his heart, against the poor despised, and mournful prophet, and vented all that he dared to do, to testify his contempt of his person and preaching. Reader! it is blessed in the present hour, that God's faithful servants have the protection of the law: for otherwise, the malice of hell would break out in open acts of violence, against the Lord's servants. As they did by Stephen, so would carnal men in all ages do to all, and gnash upon them with their teeth. Acts, vii. 54. I beg the Reader, not to overlook the peaceable and meek temper of Jeremiah upon this occasion, in going his way. And while the Reader remarks the conduct of the servant, I hope he will not need to be reminded of the unequalled patience of the Master, who *when he was reviled, reviled not again.* Oh!

precious, precious Lord Jesus! in all things thou must have the pre-eminence. 1 Peter, ii. 23.

12 ¶ Then the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah *the prophet* (after that Hananiah the prophet had broken the yoke from off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah) saying,

13 Go, and tell Hananiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Thou hast broken the yokes of wood; but thou shalt make for them yokes of iron.

14 For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, I have put a yoke of iron upon the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and they shall serve him: and I have given him the beasts of the field also.

With what blessedness doth the Lord make known to his servants in their retirements, the sacred purposes of his will. No doubt though it be not related in this place, the Prophet Jeremiah when he left Hananiah, and went his way, went to spread the whole matter; like another Hezekiah, before the Lord, Isaiah, xxxvii. 14. Where shall a poor exercised soul go, but to a throne of grace? Where shall a servant opposed in his message relate the reception he hath met with, but to his Master? Oh! it is most blessed in all things; *by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving to make our requests known unto God.* And the promise is absolute and encouraging. See Prov. iii. 6. Psalm xxv. 14.

15 ¶ Then said the prophet Jeremiah unto Hananiah the prophet, Hear now Hananiah; The LORD hath not sent thee, but thou makest this people to trust in a lie.

16 Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will cast thee from off the face of the earth: this year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the LORD.

Behold Reader! what holy boldness the Lord imparts to his faithful servants. It doth not appear by what was said in the former verses, when the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, that it was revealed to him of Hananiah's death. And yet observe, Jeremiah not only pronounced his death, but limited the time. He had said, that within *two* years, the people should be delivered from the fear of the King of Babylon. Now Jeremiah limits Hananiah's death to *one*. I beg the Reader to remark this, and to turn to other passages in the word of God, to observe how the Lord doth at times, thus give

sanction to the message of his faithful servants. See Numb. xvi. 28—33. Acts, xiii. 8—11.

17 So Hananiah the prophet died the same year, in the seventh month.

This is but a short verse, but it is a most awful one. The Holy Ghost hath made a great emphasis of it. So Hananiah the prophet died. And not only the same year, but within two months from the time, that he taught rebellion against the Lord. *Two years* he had limited to the fulfilment of his lies. And *two months* only the Lord limited to the fulfilment of his iniquity. Reader! pause and ponder well the awfulness of such a character! See another such a death. Luke, xvi. 22, 23.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! Can any portion of God's holy word speak more decidedly or more awfully, in determining between true and false Prophets and Teachers, than what is said in this Chapter.

Who that had been present at *Hananiah's* message, as he solemnly prefaced what he had to say in the name of the Lord, but would have taken part with him, leaning so much as it did to the side of mercy? And who but would have looked at *Jeremiah* with displeasure, as one that had been making the people sorrowful, with unnecessary alarms? But what an awful reverse of circumstances soon took place, to determine their true character. And are there not *Hananiah's* in the present hour? Do not many come forth in the Lord's name, whom the Lord never sent? And do not they cause men to trust in lies, saying, *peace, peace, when there is no peace*. Robbing the Redeemer of his glory, and precious souls of their true happiness: in bolstering sinners up in the false confidence of their own righteousness, instead of preaching Christ to the people?

Lord! do thou countenance all thy faithful *Jeremiah's* of gospel times, and stop the mouths of them that run unsent, who speak smooth things, and prophecy deceits. Manifest the truth of thine own cause, and let not thy people be brought under their delusions: but give to all thy redeemed, Pastors after thine own heart, that may instruct and feed thy people with true understanding and knowledge.

CHAP. XXIX.

CONTENTS.

We have in this Chapter an account of the Prophet Jeremiah's letter, which he sent to the captives in Babylon. Here is also the fearful doom pronounced by the Lord, upon two lying prophets.

NOW these are the words of the letter, that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem, unto the residue of the elders which were carried away captives, and to the priests, and to the pro-

phets, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon.

2 (After that Jeconiah the king, and the queen, and the eunuchs, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, and the carpenters, and the smiths, were departed from Jerusalem.)

3 By the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiyah (whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent unto Babylon,) to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, saying,

The Reader will recollect, that at this time many of the people were already gone into captivity, and the false prophets, and time-serving persons of the party, were building up the hopes of the people, as Hananiah had done at home, with assurances of their speedy return to their own land. Jeremiah being better taught of the Lord, here sets himself to correct their mistaken notions on this point, and therefore sends a letter to them on the subject.

4 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all that are carried away captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon,

5 Build ye houses, and dwell *in them*; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them.

6 Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters, that ye may be increased there, and not diminished.

7 And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.

The first endeavours to reconcile their minds to the Lord's determination. Seventy years were appointed for their captivity: and therefore, he recommends the people to live and act as persons who were not travellers, that turned in to tarry for a night. The Lord's will must be accomplished. Here is a gracious lesson to the people of God, to be gathered from hence in all ages. In a nation's peace, the Church of God shall have peace. See that ye pray for it therefore, and promote it by all the lawful means in your power. 1 Timothy, ii. 1, 2.

8 ¶ For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Let not your prophets and your diviners, that *be* in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed.

9 For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name ; I have not sent them, saith the LORD.

There have been, and there always will be, as long as the Church continues militant upon earth, persons to prophecy smooth things, to prophecy deceits, saying, peace, peace, when there is no peace. It began with the first lie of hell, in the garden of Eden. Gen. iii. 3, 4.

10 ¶ For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word towards you, in causing you to return to this place.

11 For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

12 Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.

13 And ye shall seek me, and find *me*, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

14 And I will be found of you, saith the LORD : and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD ; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.

I pray the Reader to pause over these gracious expressions of the Lord. They are suited to the Lord's exercised family, in all ages, at all times, and under all the sorrows of their estate. Mark how many the promises are, and let them be to you for a token of God's faithfulness.

15 ¶ Because ye have said, The LORD hath raised us up prophets in Babylon :

16 *Know* that thus saith the LORD of the king that sitteth upon the throne of David, and of all the people that dwelleth in this city, *and* of your brethren that are not gone forth with you into captivity ;

17 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, I will send upon them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and will make them like vile figs, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil.

18 And I will persecute them with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence, and will deliver them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and an astonishment, and an hissing, and a reproach among all the nations, whither I have driven them :

19 Because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the LORD, which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up early, and sending *them*, but ye would not hear, saith the LORD.

That the Church might perfectly consider and understand the cause of this Captivity: and that in general sins there should be general calamities, the Lord declares the same or similar evils, for those not gone into captivity, as for those that were. *All have sinned, and come short of God's glory. No flesh can glory in his presence.* Romans, iii. 10—23.

20 ¶ Hear ye therefore the word of the LORD, all ye of the captivity, whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon :

21 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, of Ahab the son of Kolaiah, and of Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, which prophesy a lie unto you in my name, Behold, I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and he shall slay them before your eyes.

22 And of them shall be taken up a curse by all the captivity of Judah, which *are* in Babylon, saying, The LORD, make thee like Zedekiah, and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire.

23 Because they have committed villany in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives, and have spoken lying words in my name, which I have not commanded them, even I know, and *am* a witness, saith the LORD.

What an awful judgment is here denounced upon false prophets! All rebellious children shall be punished; but they who both rebel themselves, and teach others to rebel, shall have a tenfold judgment, even to become a proverb of reproach. Oh! what a lesson is here, within a short compass, to false teachers and ministers in the house of the Lord!

24 ¶ Thus shalt thou also speak to Shemaiah the Nehelamite, saying,

25 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, Because thou hast sent letters in thy name unto all the people that *are* at Jerusalem, and to Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, and to all the priests, saying,

26 The LORD hath made thee priest in the stead of Jehoiada the priest, that ye should be officers in the house of the LORD, for every man *that is* mad, and maketh himself a prophet, that thou shouldest put him in prison, and in the stocks:

27 Now therefore why hast thou not reprov'd Jeremiah of Anathoth, which maketh himself a prophet to you?

28 For therefore he sent unto us *in* Babylon, saying, This *captivity is* long: build ye houses, and dwell *in them*; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them.

29 And Zephaniah the priest read this letter in the ears of Jeremiah the prophet.

30 ¶ Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, saying,

31 Send to all them of the captivity, saying, Thus saith the LORD, concerning Shemaiah the Nehelamite, Because that Shemaiah hath prophesied unto you, and I sent him not, and he caused you to trust in a lie:

32 Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite, and his seed: he shall not have a man to dwell among his people; neither shall he behold the good that

I will do for my people, saith the LORD, because he hath taught rebellion against the LORD.

I cannot help admiring the gracious providence of God over the Church, in that the events which took place in one age, so exactly corresponds to what takes place in another: as if to prove to God's faithful ones, that in all ages they must and shall suffer persecution. Reader! do not fail to remark, how the faithful writings of Jeremiah is opposed by the lying writings of Shemaiah and his fellows. And doth not every generation bring forth the same? But oh! behold how the Lord himself interposeth! And thus depend upon it, in all ages the Lord is still looking on and will uphold his servants, and silence all their opposers. Oh! it is blessed to be on the Lord's side, and to be found in his truth.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! after that you have made, under divine teaching, your most serious contemplations on the different subjects proposed, from true and false prophets brought before you in this Chapter; there is a train of thoughts opened to your view, in a portion of the contents of it, to which I would beg to direct more immediately, both your meditation and my own. I mean, in that unequalled grace and goodness manifested by the Lord, in the midst of all his people's rebellion and sin, as set forth in this Chapter. After seventy years, saith the Lord, be accomplished, I will visit you, and perform my good word towards you. Reader! is not this the constant tenor and precious words of the whole charter of grace? What is God's good word towards his people, but the word of God in Christ Jesus? What is the performance of Jehovah's promise, but the promise of redemption in Christ, which he purposed in himself before the world began? And what is the whole coming of Jesus, to deliver from worse than Babylonish captivity, even from sin, death and hell; but to perform *the mercy promised to our forefathers, and to remember his holy Covenant?* Oh! what a thought is it, amidst all my rebellious ways, and after all my unworthy views of divine goodness, that *his thoughts are not our thoughts, nor his ways our ways.* Jesus saith, and God the Father saith, and let me never forget the gracious declarations: *I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord: thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end!* Do Lord! I would say, as thou hast said. Help my soul to pray to thee, and to seek for thee, as for hidden treasure, with my whole heart, and with my whole soul. And do thou Lord, gather thy Church, thy redeemed, thy people, from all places whither they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day; yea Lord, bring them all home to thy flock, and manifest that thou art their God, and that they are thy people, and the sheep of thy pasture. Amen.

C H A P. XXX.

CONTENTS.

We have in this Chapter and the following, the Prophet comforting his people with comfortable words indeed. Both the Chapters are full of gospel, and of gospel promises, from beginning to end.

THE word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

2 Thus speaketh the LORD God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee, in a book.

3 For lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.

Reader! it is your mercy and mine, as well as the Church at large, that the Lord commanded his servant, not simply to *preach* these glorious things here delivered, but to commit them to *writing*. And every word is indeed most precious. And do not fail to observe, how the Lord speaks of them: *my people Israel and Judah*, saith the Lord. Oh! precious Jesus! what a sweet thought is it, that thy people in thee are indeed a people, the Lord hath chosen for himself, and who shall shew forth his praise, Isaiah, lxiii. 21.

4 ¶ And these *are* the words that the LORD spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah.

5 For thus saith the LORD, We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace:

6 Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness?

7 Alas, for that day *is* great, so that none *is* like it: it *is* even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.

8 For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, *that* I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him.

9 But they shall serve the LORD their God,

and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.

I do not presume to decide, but I would humbly propose a subject of enquiry, and in answer to this question, whether a man doth travail with child, I would say, is not the miraculous conception and incarnation of the Lord Jesus referred to? None but Jesus travailed in birth for souls: and his soul agonies were great indeed. To none but Him, could that promise refer, Isaiah, liii. 11. And that Christ the Messiah, for the David here mentioned is spoken of, is abundantly evident, for David king of Israel had been long gathered to his fathers, and had seen corruption, when the Prophet Jeremiah exercised his ministry in the Church.

10 ¶ Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD, neither be dismayed, O Israel; for lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make *him* afraid.

11 For I *am* with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.

The Reader will not fail to remark, without being reminded of it, (for the language of this sweet passage will of itself suggest the thought) what a striking similarity there is in what is here said, to what the Prophet Isaiah delivered before on the same blessed subject. Isaiah, xliii. 1, &c.

12 For thus saith the LORD, Thy bruise *is* incurable, and thy wound *is* grievous.

13 *There is* none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up: thou hast no healing medicines.

14 All thy lovers have forgotten thee: they seek thee not; for I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one, for the multitude of thine iniquity: *because* thy sins were increased.

15 Why criest thou for thine affliction? thy sorrow *is* incurable, for the multitude of thine

iniquity : *because* thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto thee.

16 Therefore all they that devour thee, shall be devoured ; and all thine adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity : and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey.

17 For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the LORD, because they called thee an outcast, *saying*, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after.

18 ¶ Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places : and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof.

19 And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving, and the voice of them that make merry : and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few ; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small.

20 Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress them.

I stay not to detain the Reader with any observations upon this blessed passage, though in itself it would invite some of the most delightful. But the gracious things here spoken of, both in a way of judgment and mercy, are so plain and so very obvious that they can need no comment. The Lord points out the awful state of his people by the fall, and their total inability to any recovery in themselves : and thus, from impressing on their minds their undeservings, he heightens the riches of his grace in their redemption !

21 And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them ; and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me : for who *is* this that engaged his heart to approach unto me ? saith the LORD.

22 And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

I cannot forbear desiring the Reader to pause over this short, but most comprehensive passage. so full as it is of Christ, and pointing to him as it doth with a direction so truly blessed. God founds all that is said here in Covenant love, and traces all the blessings bestowed upon his people up to this one source: *ye shall be my people, and I will be your God!* And, considered in this point, how truly blessed is it to behold Jesus as our governor, in our midst, arising out of his own people, concerning whom he is not ashamed to call them brethren. Him, the Lord God our Father, will cause to draw near to himself. But who but Jesus could engage his heart to this service? Reader: can your mind imagine any thing more blessed, than thus to behold Christ, so plainly foretold, as engaging his heart to approach God for his people, as their Surety and Mediator; and Jehovah putting his blessed hand to the work, in causing him to draw near? Oh! precious, precious truth, of a thrice and tenfold precious God in Christ, *reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.*

23 Behold, the whirlwind of the LORD goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind, it shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked.

24 The fierce anger of the LORD shall not return, until he have done *it*, and until he have performed the intents of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it.

Here is awful close to the Chapter after such unspeakable mercies as were just before delivered. But then let it be remembered, it is awful only to the enemies of our God and of his Christ. The terrors threatened are said to fall upon the head of the wicked.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! amidst very many beauties in this Chapter, let you and I fix our meditation, and pray that God the Holy Ghost will make it profitable to us both, in beholding Him, concerning whom God the Father here speaks of being the Governor from among his people. And while we regard the gracious promise, and behold the Lord Jesus at the call of his Father, coming forth as the Great Head and Surety of his people; let us behold him in every possible point of view, and see how suited he is in that high character, and how suited to us for all the purposes of salvation.

Doth our God and Father demand who this is that engaged his heart to approach unto the Lord for his people? And may we not humbly, yet joyfully answer, it is the Lord our righteousness. One, and the only one, able to make up the dreadful breach which sin had made, between God and us, and restore perfect order among all the works of God. One who is, and was, and ever will be, mighty to save: *one with the Father, over all God blessed for ever: and one with us bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh.* One who

is called *Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace!*

Oh precious Lord Jesus! help us to be engaged to thee, as thou hast engaged thyself to God and thy Father for us! Say dearest Lord! how should any of Adam's fallen, ruined, helpless race have ever stood before God, hadst not thou stood up at the call of God for us, and answered in our law room and place, both by doing and by dying. Oh! for grace from henceforth to give up all engagements, to sacrifice all human covenants, all hopes of creature strength, and creature attainments, to be found wholly engaged to Christ, and to follow him in the regeneration. Do thou Lord, who hast undertaken and accomplished salvation for us, accomplish salvation in us, and be in us *the hope of glory*. Let every faculty, every wish, every thought, be brought into subjection unto thee; that henceforth we may no longer live to ourselves, but to him that died for us, and rose again. Make us thine, and be thou ours, that *being bought with a price, we may glorify thee, both in our bodies and in our spirit, which are thine for ever*. Amen.

CHAP. XXXI.

CONTENTS.

This seems to be but a continuation of the former Chapter; and a most blessed continuation it is! We have here, the Lord speaking most graciously to his people; and giving them exceeding great and precious promises in Christ, confirmed with all the sanction and authority of Jehovah.

AT the same time, saith the LORD, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.

The first observation, that I desire to offer on this most glorious chapter is, to mark to the Reader, the repeated confirmation we meet with of its blessed contents, in a *thus*, and a *thus saith the Lord*. No less than *one and twenty times*, within the space of forty verses, doth Jehovah graciously condescend to set his seal of authority to the merciful promises delivered, by the mention of his own great and incommunicable name. Reader! I beseech you never to overlook this, in whatever part of the Sacred Word it occurs. It is the testimony of Jehovah, which becomes the ground and warrant of our faith. *The testimony of the Lord is sure; yea, the Psalmist saith, that the Lord's testimonies are very sure, holiness becometh his house for ever*, Psm. xciii. 5. and Psm. xix. 7. And it is the Father's testimony, and approbation of his dear Son, as our glorious Head and Surety, which must give assurance to our faith. Every poor unbelieving sinner, who fears the salvation of his soul is too great to be believed, could never desire stronger assurances for his faith to rest on, than the Word of God. If the Lord would but say it, I should believe. Here then comes in the blessedness of this short, but comprehensive expression. *Thus saith the Lord*. But what time is

this to which the Lord refers, in which he will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be his people? I apprehend, not simply the time of restoring them from Babylon, but looking forward unto Gospel times, when both Jew and Gentile shall be brought into the fold of Christ. In confirmation of this, see Isaiah xlix. 6. Gal. iii. 29.

2 Thus saith the LORD, The people *which were left of the sword, found grace in the wilderness; even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest.*

The sword probably hath an allusion to the sorrows of Egypt, from whence the Lord brought the people out, into the wilderness, and then brought them to rest in Canaan.

3 The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, *saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.*

I do not presume to determine, but I venture to observe, that I conceive the former part of this verse is the language of the Church; and the latter the words of Jehovah. The Church having heard the Lord say in the foregoing verse, how gracious the Lord was, in bringing his people out of Egypt, takes up the subject in the opening of this verse, and is about to speak of some of the ancient proofs of God's love, when Jehovah himself interrupts her by speaking. Yea, saith the Lord, wouldst thou speak of ancient love, how ancient wouldst thou make it? It began not in Egypt; not with the Patriarchs; not with the creation of the world; but from everlasting. And the one sole cause for which I have drawn thee is, because, from everlasting I have loved thee. Precious consideration to the believer. In Jesus the Church hath been beheld, and loved, from all eternity. John xvii. 23.

4 Again, I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel: thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry.

5 Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria: the planters shall plant, and shall eat *them* as common things.

6 For there shall be a day, *that* the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God.

7 For thus saith the LORD, Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say,

O LORD, save thy people, the remnant of Israel.

All these blessings arise out of what went before. The Church was now partly in bondage, and the residue of the people were shortly to be sent thither. But the Lord looks beyond times of bondage, and comforts the people with these assurances. There shall be a day in Christ, when all these sweet effects shall follow. And whereas the Church is now without ordinances and means of grace, there shall in gospel times be great plenty, and men shall invite one another to attend them. Songs of praise shall be sung in the same to the Lord.

8 Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, *and* with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child, and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither.

9 They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born.

I do not doubt, but that these verses had respect to the bringing back the people from Babylon. But, I still think, the Holy Ghost had yet a much greater object in view, in bringing back the Lord's heritage from worse than any earthly captivity, even from the captivity of sin and Satan. For what blindness is equal to the blindness of the soul; or what captivity like the bondage of hell? If we read the passage in this spiritual point of view, we shall find it precious indeed. The Lord puts a *behold!* before the words, that the Church may take notice. And surely most worthy of notice it is: for both the north country, and all the coasts of the east shall give up God's children, when the Lord demands his own. He saith to the north, give up; and to the south, keep not back. Isaiah xliii. 6. But who are they that shall come? Both the blind and the lame. Jesus will be eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame. No impediments shall obstruct, for even a woman in travail shall not plead excuses, but joyfully follow the Lord's royal camp. And observe, Reader! the Lord saith, it shall not be a few, but a great company. John, when in vision he saw heaven opened, tells the Church, that in his day it formed a multitude that no man could number. And what an host of redeemed souls since born, and who have joined the society of the spirits of just men made perfect, who shall calculate? Rev. vii. 9. And I beg the Reader yet further to remark on this beautiful passage, *how* the redeemed are said to come. They are to come both with weeping and supplication. Tears of holy joy, under a conscious sense of undeservings: but, as holy mourners in the view

of divine mercy. The same Prophet hath elsewhere more particularly described this sweet frame of soul. Chap. l. 4, 5. And what sums up the whole beauty of this lovely passage, is in the close of it, wherein the Lord assigns the reason of this mercy; that it is not in human merit, but divine favour; and God's relationship to his people in Christ. As the Lord said to Pharaoh in Egypt, so now he saith to all: Israel is my son, my first born. Oh! precious cause of all our mercy in Christ! Exod. iv. 22.

10 ¶ Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare *it* in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattereth Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd *doth* his flock.

11 For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of *him that was* stronger than he.

12 Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the LORD, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock, and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden, and they shall not sorrow any more at all.

13 Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow.

14 And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the LORD.

I do not detain the Reader with any comment here: for the words are too plain to need any, and too sweet to admit of any without injury. Let the Reader read the passage again and again, and then mark the gracious tendencies of the Lord to his people.

15 ¶ Thus saith the LORD, A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentations *and* bitter weeping: Rahel weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they were *not*.

16 Thus saith the LORD, Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the LORD, and

they shall come again from the land of the enemy.

17 And there is hope in thine end, saith the LORD, that *thy* children shall come again to their own border.

The Evangelist hath made application of what is here said to the murder of the young children by Herod: and thereby hath very clearly shewn, that the whole of this blessed chapter is of gospel signification. *Rahel*, or *Rachel*, is, probably, put for the whole of the afflicted Parents; meaning that all felt in the general calamity. The grave of Rachel was near Bethlehem: and therefore formed a suitable image of grief. Gen. xxxv. 19. Matt. ii. 18. Pious parents, in the loss of their little ones, may find some rich, consoling thoughts from these scriptures, in the consideration of covenant mercies!

18 ¶ I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself *thus*; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God.

19 Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon *my* thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.

20 *Is* Ephraim my dear son? *is he* a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD.

Perhaps there is not a more beautiful and interesting representation in the whole compass of the Old Testament scripture, than what is here drawn, of the melting heart of a sinner by grace; and of the Lord's bowels of mercies, yearning over a returning sinner on the occasion. Here is Ephraim falling down at the footstool of the mercy-seat: and the Lord stooping down, as it were, to raise him up. I am a worthless sinner, cries Ephraim; like a beast, stubborn and restive I have been. Thou art a dear child, saith the Lord. My soul is troubled, saith Ephraim, in the recollection of what I have done: my bowels are troubled for thee, saith the Lord. Oh! what a representation is here! It can only be equalled by that divine drawing which the Lord Jesus hath given in his parable, Luke xv. 17—24. I hope the Reader cannot want a single observation, to take the whole blessedness of the instruction home to his own heart. It speaks of God's grace, mercy, and love in Christ equal to a volume; and it holds forth the most unequalled persuasion to poor sinners, in prompting them to return. Isaiah lv. 7, 8, 9.

21 Set thee up way-marks, make thee high heaps : set thine heart toward the highway, *even* the way *which* thou wentest : turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities.

22 ¶ How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the LORD hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man.

23 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah, and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity, The LORD bless thee, O habitation of justice, *and* mountain of holiness.

24 And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all the cities thereof together, husbandmen, and they *that* go forth with flocks.

25 For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul.

I do not presume to decide upon this passage, but I venture to propose my views of it to the Reader. I do not object to the comment of those who suppose the return of the people from Babylon might be implied in it. But I cannot but think an infinitely higher object was intended from what is here said. *A woman compassing a man*, cannot have the smallest connection with the mere event of the people's returning from Babylon. Surely an eye to the incarnation of Jesus, is here plainly set forth. Isaiah's prophesy compared with it, and explained together, make the matter pretty clear. And if so, what a blessed prophesy is here? Isaiah ix. 6. Isaiah vii. 14. And yet further, God's creating a new thing in the earth, is eminently so, in respect to the incarnation of Christ. For, if Christ's human nature had been made out of man, as *Eve* was, this would not have been a new thing. Neither, had his human nature been made out of nothing, as Adam was, would this have been new. But to make Christ's human nature of a woman, yea, of the seed of the woman, and that without an human father; this was a thing new indeed. Isaiah xliii. 19.

26 Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me.

I put this verse by itself from the singularity of its contents. And while I propose my views of it, I pray the Reader to look up to the Lord as his teacher, to lead him, and to guide him into all truth. Is not this verse (for I ask the question) a new subject, a new paragraph, and a different speaker from the former? Who was it that

is said here to have awaked? If we suppose it to be the blessed Jesus, may we not without violence to the expression conceive, that it refers to that period, when after the third day from our Lord's death, he arose from the dead! And when he arose, might he not be supposed to say, that the short sleep of that temporary death was sweet to him, because by it he destroyed the everlasting sleep of eternal death to all his people? *By death he destroyed him that had the power of death*: and now, as the glorious Head of his body, the Church, he felt a blessedness and a sweetness in it, because in his triumphs all his people were concerned. I leave the Reader to his own thoughts on the subject. May a gracious and infallible Teacher instruct both Writer and Reader on the point, to the glory of God in Jesus Christ, Heb. ii. 14, 15. 1 Cor. xv. 20.

27 ¶ Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will sow the house of Israel, and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast.

28 And it shall come to pass, *that* like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the LORD.

29 In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge.

30 But every one shall die for his own iniquity, every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge.

Perhaps, in allusion to the flourishing state of Christ's church, under the latter day dispensation, this prophesy had respect. But what I particularly desire the Reader to remark with me is, the different features which are here drawn between the Old Testament Church and the New, on this subject. The covenant under the law entailed all the effects of the breaches of it upon the children. But in Christ Jesus, the new nature from him and in him, as the covenant himself, entails all his blessings on all his seed. Compare Exod. xx. 5, with Isaiah lix. 31.

31 ¶ Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt

(which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD.)

33 But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

The Holy Ghost hath himself given the comment of this passage, in Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, Chap. viii. which supersedes all that might be offered. I only beg to remind the Reader, while comparing both scriptures, and pondering well the subject, that he looks out for the fulfillment of it in himself in the evidences of divine teaching. If that promise be in your own instance completed: and as a child of God you are taught of God, then must the Lord have given you a new heart, and proved himself as your covenant God in Christ, and in you, as belonging to his people. Isaiah liv. 13. John vi. 45.

35 ¶ Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, *and* the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; the LORD of hosts *is* his name.

36 If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, *then* the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.

37 Thus saith the LORD, If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done, saith the LORD.

I pray the Reader not to overlook the abundant grace of God, in thus appealing to his covenant concerning his providences, made after the flood, and the confirmation of it in Jeremiah's days, as a token and pledge of his covenant concerning grace. And I pray the Reader not to forget the further confirmation of it, from Jeremiah's

days to the present. See Genesis viii. 21, 22. See it again Jeremiah xxxiii. 20, 21, 25.

38 ¶ Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the city shall be built to the LORD, from the tower of Hananeel, unto the gate of the corner.

39 And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it, upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath.

40 And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse-gate toward the east, *shall be holy* unto the LORD; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever.

If we accept this promise as in the smallest degree referring to the building of the second temple and the city, after the people's return from Babylon, we must still look further to gospel days, to observe the full accomplishment of it: for there we find holiness indeed unto the Lord, in Jesus the glorious Head of his church, so as the church must be preserved in him for ever.

REFLECTIONS.

PONDER well my soul, from the perusal of this most blessed Chapter that sacred source of all thy happiness, the everlasting love of God. See to it, that from thence it is, that Jesus Mediator with all his fulness comes, and God thy Father, becomes the God of all the families of Israel. And do not fail to connect with this soul-transporting view, that if thou art Christ's, then art thou interested in this family, being *Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

And oh! most gracious Lord! do as thou hast said; bring Lord, thy sons from far, and thy daughters from the ends of the earth: bring them both from the north and south; let the blind eyes be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Nothing shall be impediments in the way of salvation, when Jesus gives but the power; even the women with child shall come, and her that travaileth with child together. And, as true penitents and holy mourners, shall all thy dispersed come, for thou wilt lead them as thou hast said: and their way in Jesus shall be a strait way, wherein they shall not stumble. No lamentation in Ramah; no sorrow for children in the church of Jesus shall be heard, for the child in Christ shall die an hundred years old; while the sinner, who is an hundred years old, out of Christ, shall be accursed. Precious Lord! all thy ransomed ones, when instructed and brought back, shall come like Ephraim; and our covenant God will be full of bowels of compassion to his poor long lost wanderers. In the incarnation and ministry of Jesus will be all

joy; and as Jesus himself was in the morning of his resurrection, as one refreshed with sleep, so shall the triumph of his people be in him!

Will the Lord then bring on to every child of his the sure and certain promise, and now in the last days, fulfil that gracious word, in *putting his law in our minds, and writing it in our hearts*; in being *our God*, and making us *his people*: that henceforth we may no longer ask around, or say to others, *Know the Lord*; for *all shall know thee from the least to the greatest*? We look up to thee O Lord for this unspeakable gift of the latter day glory! We wait for the sure accomplishment of it! For as sure as the ordinances of day and night are in the Lord's own appointment; so equally sure are the children of Christ heirs of the promise. Blessed God and Father in Christ Jesus; so let all thy promises be yea and amen in him. Amen.

C H A P. XXXII.

CONTENTS.

We have in this Chapter the imprisonment of Jeremiah for his faithfulness. The Prophet complains to God. The Lord confirms the word of his servant. The Chapter closeth with God's gracious promises of a return to the people.

THE word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which *was* the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar.

2 For then the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem: and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which *was* in the king of Judah's house.

3 For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying, Wherefore dost thou prophesy, and say, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it.

4 And Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape out of the hand of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him mouth to mouth, and his eyes shall behold his eyes.

5 And he shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon, and there shall he be until I visit him, saith the LORD:

though ye fight with the Chaldeans, ye shall not prosper?

There was some considerable space, it should seem between the close of the former Chapter and this, for, according to the date of the eighteenth year of *Nebuchadrezzar*, it could not be very far from the time of the total overthrow of the kingdom. Let the Reader not overlook the faithfulness of God's servant upon this occasion. Where is the servant, where is the minister of God in the present hour to be found for such integrity?

6 ¶ And Jeremiah said, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

7 Behold Hanameel the son of Shallum thine uncle shall come unto thee, saying, Buy thee my field that *is* in Anathoth: for the right of redemption *is* thine to buy *it*.

8 So Hanameel mine uncle's son came to me in the court of the prison, according to the word of the LORD, and said unto me, Buy my field, I pray thee, that *is* in Anathoth, which *is* in the country of Benjamin: for the right of inheritance *is* thine, and the redemption *is* thine, buy *it* for thyself: then I knew that this *was* the word of the LORD.

9 And I bought the field of Hanameel my uncle's son, that *was* in Anathoth, and weighed him the money, *even* seventeen shekels of silver.

10 And I subscribed the evidence, and sealed *it*, and took witnesses, and weighed *him* the money in the balances.

11 So I took the evidence of the purchase, *both* that which was sealed *according* to the law and custom, and that which was open.

12 And I gave the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, in the sight of Hanameel mine uncle's son, and in the presence of the witnesses that subscribed the book of the purchase, before all the Jews that sat in the court of the prison.

13 ¶ And I charged Baruch before them, saying,

14 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open, and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days.

15 For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God Israel, Houses, and fields, and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.

The Lord was pleased by this token, of causing Jeremiah to buy a portion of land, in the prospect of the loss of all the land, to testify, that his word should stand: and though for a time he gave his people up, he would not cast them finally away. I pray the Reader not to overlook the Lord Jesus in this. He was and is our Kinsman Redeemer, to whom the right of our lost and long forfeited possessions belonged, of redemption, Ruth iv. 7—11.

16 ¶ Now when I had delivered the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed unto the LORD, saying,

17 Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched-out arm, *and* there is nothing too hard for thee.

18 Thou shewest loving-kindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them: the Great, the Mighty God, the LORD of hosts *is* his name,

19 Great in counsel, and mighty in work (for thine eyes *are* open upon all the ways of the sons of men, to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings):

20 Which hast set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, *even* unto this day, and in Israel and amongst *other* men, and hast made thee a name, as at this day,

21 And hast brought forth thy people Israel out of the land of Egypt, with signs, and with wonders, and with a strong hand, and with a stretched-out arm, and with great terror;

22 And hast given them this land which thou didst swear to their fathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey.

23 And they came in and possessed it; but they obeyed not thy voice, neither walked in thy law; they have done nothing of all that thou commandest them to do: therefore thou hast caused all this evil to come upon them.

24 Behold the mounts, they are come unto the city to take it, and the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans that fight against it, because of the sword, and of the famine, and of the pestilence; and what thou hast spoken is come to pass; and behold, thou seest *it*.

25 And thou hast said unto me, O Lord God, Buy thee the field for money, and take witnesses: for the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.

What a beautiful view is here given of the piety and faith of the Prophet! With what zeal and earnestness doth he set his heart to seek the Lord. Though all his remonstrances and entreaties had failed, in seeking to persuade men; yet who can say, the Prophet thought with himself, what prayer shall do with God. Reader! let such views lead the heart to Jesus? Think of him and his all-prevailing intercession in all seasons of distress!

26 ¶ Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, saying,

27 Behold, I *am* the LORD, the God of all flesh: Is there any thing too hard for me?

28 Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it.

29 And the Chaldeans that fight against this city, shall come and set fire on this city, and burn it with the houses, upon whose roofs they have offered incense unto Baal, and poured out drink-offerings unto other gods, to provoke me to anger.

30 For the children of Israel, and the children of Judah have only done evil before me from their youth: for the children of Israel have only provoked me to anger with the work of their hands, saith the LORD.

31 For this city hath been to me, *as* a provocation of mine anger, and of my fury, from the day that they built it, even unto this day: that I should remove it from before my face:

32 Because of all the evil of the children of Israel, and of the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke me to anger, they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

33 And they have turned unto me the back, and not the face; though I taught them rising up early, and teaching *them*, yet they have not hearkened to receive instruction.

34 But they set their abominations in the house, which is called by my name, to defile it.

35 And they built the high places of Baal, which *are* in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through *the fire* unto Molech, which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.

We have here the Lord's gracious answer to the Prophet's prayer, Isaiah lxxv. 24. I think it not altogether improbable, but, as the Lord had directed Jeremiah to buy the field in *Anathoth*, even in the prospect of the ruin of the whole nation; that Jeremiah had some hopes that the Lord would still spare the people from captivity. The Lord's answer throws down all those hopes. The sentence is gone forth, and the Lord will not reverse it. Oh! what a lesson in all ages of the Church, to seek the Lord while he may be found, and not to put off from day to day.

36 ¶ And now therefore, thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city, whereof ye say, It shall be delivered into the hand of the

king of Babylon, by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence :

37 Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath : and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely :

38 And they shall be my people, and I will be their God :

39 And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them :

40 And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good ; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.

41 Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly, with my whole heart, and with my whole soul.

42 For thus saith the LORD, Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them.

43 And fields shall be bought in this land, whereof ye say, *It is desolate without man or beast ; it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.*

44 Men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe evidences, and seal *them*, and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the mountains, and in the cities of the valley, and in the cities of the south : for I will cause their captivity to return, saith the LORD.

Reader! I beseech you to ponder well the precious things which are contained in the bosom of this scripture ; and read them over again and again. Were there ever promises more gracious, even in

the midst of the most flagrant impiety? Can there be any form of words equal in point of tenderness, to shew the Lord's love to his people? He makes use of human affections, and expresseth himself by human feelings, in saying, that he will do what he will do, in love and mercy, *with his whole heart, and with his whole soul*. And who but Jesus is this? Are not these words peculiarly his? Oh! dearest Lord, what affection must there have been in thy heart toward thy people, who thus so many years before thou didst openly tabernacle in substance of our flesh, even then to condescend to speak to thy redeemed under the expression of human passions.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! behold in the example of Zedekiah King of Judah, how sin hardens. Though every tittle Jeremiah had foretold during the many years of his preaching, had come to pass, and not one thing had failed: though the false prophet Hananiah, that prophesied smooth things, and had promised peace, had suddenly died for his daring impiety; yet no one effect had either wrought upon the mind of Zedekiah, or his princes, or the people. Oh! what an awful state to be given up to a judicial blindness, and to the obduracy of a hardened and impenitent heart!

Behold the faithfulness of Jeremiah in the times of such impending danger. What a blessed state is that, which grace alone can induce, when neither the frowns nor smiles of men bring a snare!

But chiefly from this Chapter, may the reflections both of him that writes, and him that reads be directed, to behold Jesus in his unceasing tenderness and compassion over his people. Can the imagination form a representation of any thing so lovely, as what is here said, of God's gathering his dispersed, and bringing home his captives, notwithstanding all their obstinacy and rebellion against him? Precious Lord! let every one of thine say, be it unto us according to thy word. If thou Lord wilt undertake both for thyself and people in this everlasting covenant, then most assuredly all those blessings must come to pass, and in the gift of one heart and one way, to fear thee and love thee for ever; neither the father nor the children shall depart from thee! Oh! the sweetness and blessedness of that promise, in which thou hast said: *I will not; and they shall not; I will not turn from them, and they shall not depart from me.* Oh! for grace to live in the constant belief of this most blessed truth, by which all thy redeemed are safe, and shall not be cast down nor destroyed for ever. Amen.

CHAP. XXXIII.

CONTENTS.

The Prophet prophesieth in the prison. The Lord confirms the word of Jeremiah. Many gracious promises are mingled with God's determined judgments in this Chapter.

MOREOVER, the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah the second time (while he was yet shut up in the court of the prison) saying,

2 Thus saith the LORD, the maker thereof, the LORD that formed it, to establish it, the LORD is his name,

3 Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.

4 For thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city, and concerning the houses of the kings of Judah, *which are* thrown down by the mounts, and by the sword.

5 They come to fight with the Chaldeans, but *it is* to fill them with the dead bodies of men, whom I have slain in mine anger and in my fury, and for all whose wickedness I have hid my face from this city.

6 Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth.

7 And I will cause the captivity of Judah, and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them, as at the first.

8 And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.

9 ¶ And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do

unto them : and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness, and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it.

Some of Paul the Apostle's sweetest Epistles and preaching was when he was shut up in prison : witness to the Church of the Philippians, and his preaching to the jailor, Acts xvi. And certainly Jeremiah in this and the former Chapter, hath given a most eminently sweet savour of the unction of his ministry.

10 Thus saith the LORD, Again there shall be heard in this place (which ye say *shall be* desolate without man and without beast, *even* in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, *that are* desolate, without man, and without inhabitant, and without beast)

11 The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the LORD of hosts : for the LORD *is* good, for his mercy *endureth* for ever ; *and* of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD : for I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as at the first, saith the LORD.

12 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Again in this place, *which is* desolate without man and without beast, and in all the cities thereof, shall be an habitation of shepherds causing *their* flocks to lie down.

13 In the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the vale, and in the cities of the south, and in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, shall the flocks pass again under the hand of him that telleth *them*, saith the LORD.

I pass over many beauties in those verses, which would furnish out much room for the most delightful meditation, in order to beg the Reader's attention to that most interesting part, which so plainly and so fully points to the Lord Jesus. Of whom can the Prophet be supposed to speak concerning *him* that telleth the flocks, but the Lord Jesus Christ? Was it not He that took down their names in the everlasting covenant, when he bargained for their redemption, and when he received them from the Father? Did he not say, in the

days of his flesh, that *all the Father had given him should come to him*? And indeed, was he not engaged to give *eternal life to as many as the Father had given him*? Surely the words can be interpreted in no other sense. And I pray the Reader, as a further confirmation to remark, that the flocks are here said to pass *again*, under the hands of him that telleth them, which is without doubt, a positive proof, that they had passed *before*. So much to the purpose is this one glorious scripture; and so blessed in the confirmation of the rich mercy of God in Jesus Christ!

14 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel, and to the house of Judah.

15 ¶ In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.

16 In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this *is the name* wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness.

I pray the Reader to compare this scripture with what was said to the same purport in Chapter xxiii. 6. and let the Reader pause over the blessedness of both, and remark from both, how much these grand things lay upon the heart of Jehovah. And I beseech the Reader not to overlook the varied expression in this passage, from that which was before. Here it is, *She* that is said to be called the Lord our righteousness. And there it was *He*, who was to be known by that name. And wherefore is it so altered, but to shew and prove also, that as the Lord Jesus, as the Husband and Head of his Church and people, becomes the Lord our righteousness! so the Church as wife, interested and bearing part in all that belongs to him, takes his name also. Reader! the truth of this is undeniable, and the preciousness and blessedness is beyond all calculation. See these scriptures in confirmation: Isaiah xlix. 3. where Christ takes the Church's name. And 1 Cor. xii. 12. and Jerem. xxiii. 16. as well as here the Church is called by the Lord's name. And from such a communication of names and interest, a oneness and union becomes undeniable.

17 ¶ For thus saith the LORD, David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel.

18 Neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt-offerings, and to kindle meat-offerings, and to do sacrifice continually.

I do not presume to decide, but I would venture to enquire, is not the Lord Jesus, both in his royal and in his priestly offices, pointed out here?

19 ¶ And the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah, saying,

20 Thus saith the LORD, If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season :

21 *Then* may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites, the priests, my ministers.

22 As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured : so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me.

23 Moreover, the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah, saying,

24 Considerest thou not what this people have spoken, saying, The two families which the LORD hath chosen, he hath even cast them off? thus they have despised my people, that they should be no more a nation before them.

25 Thus saith the LORD, If my covenant *be* not with day and night, *and if* I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth :

26 Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, *so* that I will not take *any* of his seed *to be* rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob : for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them.

We have here two short, but sweet Sermons of the Prophet, and both to the same amount, by way of confirming the word. The Lord appeals to his original Covenant made after the flood, by way of assuring the Church of his mercy. If the Covenant of day and night cease, then, and not before, may the seed of our spiritual David tremble for their captivity. Gen. viii. 21, 22.

REFLECTIONS.

SWEET and blessed are the great truths of a Covenant God in Christ, which are contained in this Chapter! May the soul both of the Writer and Reader, through grace, enter into the full enjoyment of them. And as it was here with the Church in her deep affliction, so is it in all ages with the Church under her exercises; the salvation by her Lord remains, while her transgressions testify against her. The Lord will cleanse his people from their iniquity, and will turn back their captivity, and will pardon all their sins for his own great name's sake.

My soul! do thou be sure take part in these sweet promises, from the sure interest thou hast in Jesus. It is for his sake, and for his sake alone these mercies are secure. And be thou looking forward, with an holy joy, founded in the confidence of his righteousness, that Jesus will come to call all his redeemed to him, for all and every one, one by one, must pass again under his hand that telleth them. He hath once received them from his Father, and they are the purchase of his blood, and the conquest of his Spirit; and therefore, he will take effectual care that not one of them shall be found wanting, when he maketh up his jewels. Hail then, thou blessed dearest Jesus! This is the name whereby thy Church, from being one with thee, shall be called, *the Lord our righteousness!* God will confirm his Covenant, and perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which he hath sworn unto our fathers, from the days of old.

CHAP. XXXIV.

CONTENTS.

The Prophet is again commissioned with heavy tidings to Zedekiah and to the people. As the time of the captivity drew near, the alarm became greater.

THE word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD (when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and all his army, and all the kingdoms of the earth of his dominion, and all the people, fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities thereof) saying,

2 Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Go, and speak to Zedekiah king of Judah, and tell him, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire.

3 And thou shalt not escape out of his hand, but shalt surely be taken, and delivered into his

hand, and thine eyes shall behold the eyes of the king of Babylon, and he shall speak with thee mouth to mouth, and thou shalt go to Babylon.

We cannot sufficiently admire the faithfulness of the Prophet, in following up the will of the Lord. Times were dangerous, but Jeremiah considered, that there was but the more reason to be conscientious. Though a prison was before him, and into it he knew he should be sent, yet whether men would hear, or whether they would forbear, he dared be honest. Ezek. ii. 5, 6.

4 Yet hear the word of the LORD, O Zedekiah king of Judah, Thus saith the LORD of thee, Thou shalt not die by the sword ;

5 *But* thou shalt die in peace : and with the burnings of thy fathers the former kings which were before thee, so shall they burn *odours* for thee, and they will lament thee, *saying*, Ah, lord ! for I have pronounced the word, saith the LORD.

6 Then Jeremiah the prophet spake all these words unto Zedekiah king of Judah and Jerusalem,

7 When the king of Babylon's army fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities of Judah *that were left*, against Lachish, and against Azekah : for these defenced cities remained of the cities of Judah.

While the Prophet used faithfulness, he forgot not exhortation. It is the duty of ministers to admonish as well as reprove. And never surely was there a servant of the Lord more tender, in his persuasions to the King and people, than Jeremiah. So are commanded all Jesus's ministers to be. 2 Timothy iv. 1, 2.

8 ¶ *This is* the word that came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, after that the king Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people which *were* at Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty unto them ;

9 That every man should let his man-servant and every man his maid-servant, *being* an Hebrew, or an Hebrewess, go free, that none should serve himself of them, *to wit*, of a Jew his brother.

10 Now when all the princes, and all the people which had entered into the covenant, heard that

every one should let his man-servant, and every one his maid-servant, go free, that none should serve themselves of them any more, then they obeyed, and let *them* go.

11 But afterward they turned, and caused the servants and the hand-maids, whom they had let go free, to return, and brought them into subjection for servants, and for hand-maids.

12 ¶ Therefore the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

13 Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bond-men, saying,

14 At the end of seven years, let ye go every man his brother an Hebrew, which hath been sold-unto thee : and when he hath served thee six years, thou shalt let him go free from thee : but your fathers hearkened not unto me, neither inclined their ear.

15 And ye were now turned, and had done right in my sight, in proclaiming liberty every man to his neighbour ; and ye had made a covenant before me in the house which is called by my name.

16 But ye turned and polluted my name, and caused every man his servant, and every man his hand-maid, whom he had set at liberty at their pleasure, to return, and brought them into subjection, to be unto you for servants and for hand-maids.

17 Therefore thus saith the LORD, Ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbour : behold, I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the LORD, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to

the famine, and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.

18 And I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof.

19 The princes of Judah, and the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, and the priests, and all the people of the land, which passed between the parts of the calf,

20 I will even give them into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life; and their dead bodies shall be for meat unto the fowls of the heaven, and to the beasts of the earth.

21 And Zedekiah king of Judah, and his princes will I give into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life, and into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which are gone up from you.

22 Behold, I will command, saith the LORD, and cause them to return to this city, and they shall fight against it, and take it, and burn it with fire: and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without an inhabitant.

Concerning the law for the release of servants, we have it at large, Exod. xxi. 16. And as this was a beautiful type of the Lord Jesus, in becoming Jehovah's servant for his Church and people; it was most strictly to be observed; and it should seem that it was very religiously followed, when at any time trouble was upon Israel: but when the trouble was over, the great ones oppressed their brethren as before. So was it at this time. So was it in the after age of Nehemiah. See Nehem. v. 1—13. Oh! what poor wretched unfeeling creatures sin hath made us! without natural affection, sin is among the most awful judgments of the fall. Romans i. 31.

REFLECTIONS.

WE cannot close this Chapter without first stopping to admire God's patience and man's unworthiness. Though judgment was at the door, and every one seemed to be tremblingly alive at what would follow, yet sin is not lessened. Gracious God! what but sovereign grace can soften the human heart!

Precious Lord Jesus! thou wert indeed the servant, who would not go out free. For the love that thou didst bear thy Father, and the love thou didst bear thy wife the Church, and the children which the Father had given thee; thy ear was indeed bored, and thou didst give *thy back to the smiters, and thy cheeks to them that plucked off the hair.* Thou didst not hide thy face from shame and spitting. Oh! for grace to imitate thy blessed example, and in all the circumstances of life, to shew mercy in having obtained mercy.

C H A P. XXXV.

CONTENTS.

We have here a subject introduced in the midst of Israel's history, of the history of a family obedient to their father. The Prophet makes a suitable improvement from it, to set forth the shamefulness of the disobedience of the family of Israel towards God their Father.

THE word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying,

2 Go unto the house of the Rechabites, and speak unto them, and bring them into the house of the LORD, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink.

This family of the Rechabites was an antient family, for we find the founder of it in the days of Jesse, 2 Kings x. 15, 16. But some have supposed that it began much earlier, even tracing it to Hobab, Moses's father-in-law. I refer the Reader, if he be desirous to examine this point for himself, to Numbers x. 29, 30. Judges i. 16. The prohibition of wine should seem to imply, that the original founder was of the order of the Nazarites. But whether so or not, the house of the Rechabites became a living reproach to all the drunkards of Ephraim. Oh! for more of the house of the Rechabites in this our day!

3 Then I took Jaazaniah the son of Jeremiah, the son of Habaziniyah, and his brethren, and all his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites.

4 And I brought them into the house of the LORD, into the chamber of the sons of Hanan, the

son of Igdaliah, a man of God, which *was* by the chamber of the princes, which *was* above the chamber of Maaseiah the son of Shallum, the keeper of the door :

5 And I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites pots full of wine, and cups, and I said unto them, Drink ye wine.

6 But they said, We will drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, *neither* ye, nor your sons, for ever :

7 Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have *any*: but all your days ye shall dwell in tents, that ye may live many days in the land where ye *be* strangers.

8 Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab our father, in all that he hath charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, nor our daughters ;

9 Nor to build houses for us to dwell in : neither have we vineyard, nor field; nor seed :

10 But we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed, and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us.

11 But it came to pass when Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came up into the land, that we said, Come, and let us go to Jerusalem for fear of the army of the Chaldeans, and for fear of the army of the Syrians : so we dwell at Jerusalem.

Reader! after paying due attention to the filial reverence and charity of this house of the Rechabites; pause over the history, to gather another profitable instruction from it of a spiritual nature; and consider the blessedness of minds, like the Rechabites, who live detached and unconnected, and have only moveable tents to dwell in here below. The sorrows and exercises of the world are made tenfold grievous, from the large circle in which they take in those, who are ingulphed in the world and encumbered with many cares. If we are weaned from the earth, and the things of the earth, when called upon to depart from it, we shall be soon ready, for there are then few cords to tic the soul down. The believer may say with Jonadab's posterity, let me go up to the Jerusalem which is above, where Jesus

is, the *Chaldeans* and the *Syrians* are nothing to me. Oh! the blessedness of such a frame!

12 ¶ Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, saying,

13 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Go and tell the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will ye not receive instruction to hearken to my words? saith the LORD.

14 The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed; for unto this day they drink none, but obey their fathers commandment: notwithstanding I have spoken unto you, rising early, and speaking, but ye hearkened not unto me.

15 I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early, and sending *them*, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land, which I have given to you, and to your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me.

16 Because the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father, which he commanded them; but this people hath not hearkened unto me.

17 Therefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will bring upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, all the evil that I have pronounced against them: because I have spoken unto them, but they have not heard, and I have called unto them, but they have not answered.

18 ¶ And Jeremiah said unto the house of the Rechabites, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all

his precepts, and done according to all that he hath commanded you ;

19 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel ; Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever.

Here we have the application of the history, as the Lord intended it, to Judah and Jerusalem : and a close heart-felt application it is. Reader ! do not fail to observe the graciousness of the Lord to his people under all their unworthiness. Was there ever a nation or people so blessed ! Was there ever a nation or people so rebellious ! How the Chapter closeth, and what blessings to faithfulness are read to us in it ! The Lord make it profitable. For if the Lord was well pleased with affection and obedience to one another among men, what blessedness must there be in our faithfulness unto God.

REFLECTIONS.

LET us not dismiss this Chapter without taking with it the instructions the Holy Ghost seems to have intended the Church to gather from it ; for they are very many, and very interesting also. Surely the Lord hath not handed down to us this famous history of a single family, but with an express design that it might be profitable withal. There seems to be all along intended from it, a great heightening of men's folly in respect to their inattention to divine things, when in mere human things so much respect was shewn. The father of the house of the *Rechabites*, had for many ages and generations this veneration manifested towards him, when he himself was mouldered to dust, and his ashes mingled with his original earth. But the inattention God's people manifested to the Lord, was to One who inhabiteth eternity : and who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever ! The house of the *Rechabites* knew Jonadab only by name : but the Lord of hosts was known to his people by power and mighty acts, in grace, mercy, and continual favour. The authority of Jonadab certainly ceased with his life. But Israel's God was their God for ever and ever. And had the house of the *Rechabites* disobeyed Jonadab their father, the offence would have been against a man like themselves : but in Israel's disobedience, their rebellion was against the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for this was his name for ever, and this was his memorial to all generations. Pause, Reader ! and in the view, think of the forbearance, and long-suffering, and goodness of the Lord : that notwithstanding Israel's perpetual and unceasing rebellion, the Lord still cast not away his people whom he foreknew. Still the Lord carried them on, and still he loved them ; until at length Jesus came to bless them, in turning away every one of them from their iniquities ! Blessed be God for Jesus Christ !

C H A P. XXXVI.

CONTENTS.

The Church is here taught by writing, as the Prophet had before been commissioned by preaching, the same solemn truths. The effect of inattention is here set forth as the same.

AND it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that this word came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

2 Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day.

3 It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity, and their sin.

I pray the Reader to take particular notice of what the Lord saith by his servant the Prophet, in this last verse, of the *may be* that they would attend. As faith cometh by hearing, this seems to be the great inlet to the mind. And although the word is heard to little purpose until the Lord gives the word; yet we find many blessed instances, where the Lord hath blessed an attendance on the means of grace. It *may be* our mercy to be found waiting at the gates of wisdom. It *will be* our condemnation if we be found not.

4 Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah; and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the LORD, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book.

5 And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, I *am* shut up, I cannot go into the house of the LORD:

6 Therefore go thou and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the LORD in the ears of the people, in the LORD's house, upon the fasting day: and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah, that come out of their cities.

7 It may be they will present their supplication before the LORD, and will return every one from his evil way; for great *is* the anger and the fury that the LORD hath pronounced against this people.

As *Jeremiah* from long preaching was become unpleasant to those refractory spirits, *Baruch* appeared to be more likely to conciliate. The word was the same by both, and could not be altered, in accommodation to the false taste of any man; but if offences be removed by poison, let this among every other expedient be tried. Oh Lord! what possible excuses will the unreclaimed and graceless bring at the last day, before whom the holy word hath been brought, and proved ineffectual, from the voice of the Charmer, *charm he never so wisely.*

8 And Baruch the son of Neriah did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading in the book the words of the LORD in the LORD's house.

9 And it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, in the ninth month, *that* they proclaimed a fast before the LORD to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people that came from the cities of Judah unto Jerusalem.

10 Then read Baruch in the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of the LORD, in the chamber of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan the scribe, in the higher court, at the entry of the new gate of the LORD's house, in the ears of all the people.

11 ¶ When Michaiah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, had heard out of the book all the words of the LORD.

12 Then he went down into the king's house, into the scribe's chamber, and lo, all the princes sat there, *even* Elishama the scribe, and Delaiah the son of Shemaiah, and Elnathan the son of Achbor, and Gemariah the son of Shaphan, and Zedekiah the son of Hananiah, and all the princes.

13 Then Michaiah declared unto them all the

words that he had heard, when Baruch read the book in the ears of the people.

14 Therefore all the princes sent Jehudi the son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cushi, unto Baruch, saying, Take in thine hand the roll wherein thou hast read in the ears of the people, and come. So Baruch the son of Neriah took the roll in his hand, and came unto them.

15 And they said unto him, Sit down now, and read it in our ears. So Baruch read *it* in their ears.

16 Now it came to pass, when they had heard all the words, they were afraid both one and other, and said unto Baruch, We will surely tell the king of all these words.

17 And they asked Baruch, saying, Tell us now, How didst thou write all these words at his mouth?

18 Then Baruch answered them, he pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth, and I wrote *them* with ink in the book.

19 Then said the princes unto Baruch, Go hide thee, thou and Jeremiah; and let no man know where ye *be*.

20 ¶ And they went in to the king into the court, but they laid up the roll in the chamber; of Elishama the scribe, and told all the words in the ears of the king.

21 So the king sent Jehudi to fetch the roll: and he took it out of Elishama the scribe's chamber; and Jehudi read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes which stood beside the king.

22 Now the king sat in the winter-house, in the ninth month; and *there was a fire* on the hearth burning before him.

23 And it came to pass, *that* when Jehudi had

read three or four leaves, he cut it with the pen-knife, and cast *it* into the fire that *was* on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that *was* on the hearth.

24 Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, *neither* the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words.

25 Nevertheless, Elnathan, and Delaiah, and Gemariah, had made intercession to the king, that he would not burn the roll; but he would not hear them.

26 But the king commanded Jerahmeel the son of Hammelech, and Seraiah the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel, to take Baruch the scribe, and Jeremiah the prophet: but the LORD hid them.

It should seem, that *Baruch* made great use of this roll, and read in it to the people continually! For it was in the *fourth* year of *Jehoiakim* that he wrote it, and began to read it; and here we find him on the fast day in the *fifth* year still reading in it. And we have a very circumstantial account of the proceedings at this fast. I think, the fear and the terror of their looks are striking proofs of the alarm generally felt in their consciences. The hiding also both of *Jeremiah* and *Baruch* for the apprehension of the King's wrath, is another testimony of it. But let the Reader observe also, that there is not a word said of their heart turning to the Lord. Alas! until the Lord turns the heart not a single affection of the heart will turn towards him. And let the Reader observe yet further, that though their consciences were thus alarmed, yet when the daring impiety of the King was carried to such an height, as to cut the roll and cast it into the fire, not a soul rent his garment, or took shame and confusion of face. See how the Lord sheltered his faithful servants. Here also the hand of the Lord was manifested. When the Lord hid them, he thereby shewed himself!

27 ¶ Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah (after that the king had burned the roll, and the words which Baruch wrote at the mouth of Jeremiah) saying,

28 Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burned.

29 And thou shalt say to Jehoiakim king of

Judah, Thus saith the LORD, Thou hast burned this roll, saying, Why hast thou written therein, saying, The king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast?

30 Therefore thus saith the LORD, of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David, and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost.

31 And I will punish him and his seed, and his servants, for their iniquity; and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them, but they hearkened not.

32 ¶ Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah, who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah, all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire: and there were added besides unto them many like words.

Nothing can be more gracious on the part of God, than what is here said of the writing of another roll; and even adding to it more of his calls and alarms to the sinner. And nothing can be more solemn, to shew the hardness of men, as testified in the case of the obdurate King. Oh! what an awful termination to an awfully rebellious life! Reader! behold, to what a state man is reduced by the fall, when natural blindness is followed by a judicial. *Let Ephraim alone, he is joined to his idols.* Hosea iv. 17.

REFLECTIONS.

How can we better improve the perusal of this Chapter, than in considering our privileges, to whom not only a roll of a book of God's gracious dealings with his people is given, but the glorious gospel of the ever blessed God is come; and with a fulness of light, and life, and salvation, that all that are in darkness, and the shadow of death, may hear, and know the joyful sound, and be brought to walk in the light of God's countenance. Blessed Lord Jesus! what shall we render to thee for thy merciful grace towards us! Thou hast not only sent thy *Jeremiahs* and thy *Baruchs*, to write off to thy people the blessed words that came from thy mouth; but thou hast

come thyself, out of the bosom of the Father, full of grace and truth, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of thy people Israel!

Oh Lord! add a blessing to thy mission, and sanctify thy word, to the great purpose of salvation. Lord, let it not only be unto thy people, a *may be*, that they may hear and obey thy word; but make it a *shall be*, that they may be *willing in the day of thy power!* Lord, give to them the hearing ear, and the seeing eye, and the receiving and believing heart. Oh! that thy word may at all times come with power to thy redeemed, that it may be the savor of life unto life; and eminently shew itself to be, *the ingrafted word which is able to save the soul.* Amen.

C H A P. XXXVII.

CONTENTS.

The history of the siege by the Chaldeans, is related in part in this Chapter. At the report of Pharaoh's army, the siege is raised. Jeremiah, going to the land of Benjamin, is smitten and cast into prison, but after many days is taken out. He still prophesieth evil to the land.

AND king Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned instead of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, whom Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah.

2 But neither he, nor his servants, nor the people of the land, did hearken unto the words of the LORD, which he spake by the prophet Jeremiah.

What an awful thing it is, when children tread in the steps of their ungodly fathers, and the rising generation seem but to exceed the former in impiety.

3 And Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, Pray now unto the LORD our God for us.

Reader! is it not strange, that the ungodly should wilfully persist in their transgressions, and yet seek an interest in the prayers of the faithful. Is not this a testimony to God's truth. Precious Jesus! how blessed is it, that the unworthiness of the redeemed, do not put a stop to thine unceasing intercession!

4 Now Jeremiah came in and went out among the people: for they had not put him into prison.

There is somewhat very singular in this relation of Jeremiah's freedom. Surely the boldness, and faithfulness of the Prophet, must have been very galling to the king and his people. But God's fear was upon them. *Do my Prophets no harm!* Psm. cv. 15.

5 Then Pharaoh's army was come forth out of Egypt: and when the Chaldeans that besieged Jerusalem heard tidings of them, they departed from Jerusalem.

6 ¶ Then came the word of the LORD unto the prophet Jeremiah, saying,

7 Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Thus shall ye say to the king of Judah, that sent you unto me, to enquire of me, Behold, Pharaoh's army which is come forth to help you, shall return to Egypt, into their own land.

8 And the Chaldeans shall come again, and fight against this city, and take it, and burn it with fire.

9 Thus saith the LORD, Deceive not yourselves, saying, The Chaldeans shall surely depart from us: for they shall not depart.

10 For though ye had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans that fight against you, and there remained *but* wounded men among them, *yet* should they rise up every man in his tent, and burn this city with fire.

Who but must admire the Prophet upon this occasion. Oh! for a portion of the same Almighty Spirit, to be imparted to all that minister in holy things, and especially in a time of prevailing corruption. Reader! observe the temporary relief, the Lord in mercy gave, by the removal of the Chaldean army at the approach of the Egyptians. But, as the Prophet declared, and the history afterwards proved, it was but temporary. So is it with the forbearance of God to sinners, who harden themselves therefrom, in their wickedness. Observe what the Prophet saith, even wounded men shall be enough to destroy, when the Lord commissions them.

11 ¶ And it came to pass, that when the army of the Chaldeans was broken up from Jerusalem, for fear of Pharaoh's army,

12 Then Jeremiah went forth out of Jerusalem to go into the land of Benjamin, to separate himself thence in the midst of the people.

Probably the poor despised Prophet, grieving to see that all his labours for his people were so completely useless, intended to retire to *Anathoth*, there to mourn in secret over the impending desolations.

Alas! what can be more painful to a faithful servant of the Lord, than to discover all his preaching useless!

13 And when he was in the gate of Benjamin, a captain of the ward *was* there, whose name *was* Irijah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah: and he took Jeremiah, the prophet, saying, Thou fallest away to the Chaldeans.

14 Then said Jeremiah, *It is false*, I fall not away to the Chaldeans: but he hearkened not to him: so Irijah took Jeremiah and brought him to the princes.

15 Wherefore the princes were wroth with Jeremiah, and smote him, and put him in prison, in the house of Jonathan the scribe, for they had made that the prison.

Falling off to the Chaldeans, had such a thought been entertained, should have been while they were besieging Jerusalem. The thing spoke for itself, that it was both false and absurd. But, Reader! is it not the same in all ages? It is faithful ministers that incur the reproach of the ungodly; and disaffection to the earthly power, and zeal to the divine glory, are with some, one and the same. Is it not probable, that this spawn of *Hananiah*, (partaking as he did of the same malevolence,) sprung from the very false prophet of that name, who had lately died for speaking lies in the name of the Lord. See Chapter xxviii.

16 ¶ When Jeremiah was entered into the dungeon, and into the cabins, and Jeremiah had remained there many days:

17 Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took him out; and the king asked him secretly in his house, and said, Is there *any* word from the LORD? and Jeremiah said, There is: for, said he, thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon.

18 Moreover, Jeremiah said unto king Zedekiah, What have I offended against thee, or against thy servants, or against this people, that ye have put me in prison?

19 Where *are* now your prophets which prophesied unto you, saying, The king of Babylon

shall not come against you, nor against this land?

20 Therefore hear now, I pray thee, O my lord the king: let my supplication, I pray thee, be accepted before thee; that thou cause me not to return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there.

21 Then Zedekiah the king commanded that they should commit Jeremiah into the court of the prison, and that they should give him daily a piece of bread out of the baker's street, until all the bread in the city were spent. Thus Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.

We have here a most interesting relation, in which Jeremiah appears most delightful indeed. Neither stripes, nor prisons, can make the faithful servants of the Lord less faithful: yea the exercises of a prison are always found to give a greater dignity and strength to their preaching. Witness the Apostles Paul and Silas, Acts xvi. And what a rich savour do those Psalms of David afford, which were composed in the wilderness; and Paul's Epistles from prison? Psm. lxi. Epistle Philip. throughout.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! I pass by several other weighty things, which might be proposed, from the view of the events recorded in this Chapter, to call your attention, while I wish to exercise my own, on the situation of the poor, despised, and mournful Prophet, Jeremiah. Behold his faithfulness in the midst of danger; no change in his preaching could be wrought by all their threats, or his sufferings; whether cast into prison, or whether brought forth for death. It should seem, that for many days, he lay in the dungeon unregarded and unpitied, and without food. But yet, when brought from it to deliver the word of the Lord, he had no soothing message for the king. Reader! it is the happiness of God's people, in the present hour, that they are not called forth to such trying times and exercises: nevertheless, faithfulness in every age, though not exposing to bodily punishment, must and will expose to painful reproaches from the ungodly. It is very blessed to eye Jesus upon all these occasions; and to rest in the assurance that Jesus eyes his servants. Jeremiah was in the prison: John the beloved Apostle at Patmos, and Paul and Silas in the stocks: but Jesus was there also. Men may persecute, when he permits, as *Shimei* did *David*; but the day of retribution will come. And oh! what a tremendous day to those that offend one of Christ's little ones! Precious Lord! let thy grace support all thy people, during the dark and trying hour, until the bright and glorious morning come, when those their enemies, that now seem to triumph, they shall see their faces no more for ever.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

CONTENTS.

From bad to worst, the history is prosecuted concerning the conduct of the people, Jeremiah continues preaching until their passions are excited, and he is cast into the dungeon. The Lord stirreth up a stranger to intercede for his life with the king. He is taken from the pit; but still preacheth of ruin.

THEN Shephatiah the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah the son of Pashur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashur the son of Malchiah, heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken unto all the people, saying,

2 Thus saith the LORD, He that remaineth in this city, shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live.

3 Thus saith the LORD, This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it.

I again and again detain the Reader to remark the faithfulness of Jeremiah. Never surely was there a more conscientious preacher. Let the Reader connect this view of Jeremiah with his ordination, and then look up and bless God for making him faithful. Jeremiah is throughout.

4 Therefore the princes said unto the king, We beseech thee, let this man be put to death: for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt.

5 Then Zedekiah the king said, Behold, he is in your hand: for the king is not *he that can do any* thing against you.

6 Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that *was* in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon

there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire.

What an awful character was Zedekiah! Surely he had strong convictions of the truth, but like another Felix, though he trembled under the word, yet he consents to execute the preacher. Acts xxiv. 25.

7 ¶ Now when Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs which was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon (the king then sitting in the gate of Benjamin)

8 Ebed-melech went forth out of the king's house, and spake to the king, saying,

9 My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon; and he is like to die for hunger in the place where he is, for *there is* no more bread in the city.

10 Then the king commanded Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, saying, Take from hence thirty men with thee, and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon before he die.

11 So Ebed-melech took the men with him, and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took thence old cast clouts and old rotten rags, and let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah.

12 And Ebed-melech the Ethiopian said unto Jeremiah, Put now *these* old cast clouts and rotten rags under thine arm-holes, under the cords. And Jeremiah did so.

13 So they drew up Jeremiah with cords, and took him out of the dungeon: and Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.

See how the Lord raiseth instruments, from the most unexpected quarters, for the deliverance of his people. Here was a stranger, and a Gentile, prompted to fly to the rescue of one of the Lord's prophets, when all the people of the land were consenting to his death. Precious Lord Jesus! how can I read this without having my mind led instantly to thee, who coming to our whole nature, as the

divine Samaritan, delivered us from thieves, when neither Priest nor Levite would look upon us with mercy.

14 ¶ Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took Jeremiah the prophet unto him into the third entry that *is* in the house of the LORD; and the king said unto Jeremiah, I will ask thee a thing: hide nothing from me.

15 Then Jeremiah said unto Zedekiah, If I declare *it* unto thee, wilt thou not surely put me to death? and if I give thee counsel, wilt thou not hearken unto me?

16 So Zedekiah the king sware secretly unto Jeremiah, saying, *As* the LORD liveth, that made us this soul, I will not put thee to death, neither will I give thee into the hand of these men that seek thy life.

17 Then said Jeremiah unto Zedekiah, Thus saith the LORD the God of hosts, the God of Israel, If thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon's princes, then thy soul shall live, and this city shall not be burnt with fire, and thou shalt live, and thine house.

18 But if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then shall this city be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand.

19 And Zedekiah the king said unto Jeremiah, I am afraid of the Jews that are fallen to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hand, and they mock me.

20 But Jeremiah said, They shall not deliver thee: obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the LORD, which I speak unto thee: so it shall be well unto thee, and thy soul shall live.

21 But if thou refuse to go forth, this *is* the word that the LORD hath shewed me:

22 And behold, all the women that are left in the king of Judah's house, *shall be* brought forth to the king of Babylon's princes, and those *women* shall say, Thy friends have set thee on, and have prevailed against thee: thy feet are sunk in the mire, *and* they are turned away back.

23 So they shall bring out all thy wives and thy children to the Chaldeans: and thou shalt not escape out of their hand, but shalt be taken by the hand of the king of Babylon: and thou shalt cause this city to be burnt with fire.

24 ¶ Then said Zedekiah unto Jeremiah, Let no man know of these words, and thou shalt not die.

25 But if the princes hear that I have talked with thee, and they come unto thee, and say unto thee, Declare unto us now what thou hast said unto the king, hide it not from us, and we will not put thee to death; also what the king said unto thee:

26 Then thou shalt say unto them, I presented my supplication before the king, that he would not cause me to return to Jonathan's house to die there.

This must have been a very interesting interview between the king and the Prophet; and it is impossible but to take concern in it, and to wish that Zedekiah had listened to the Prophet's advice. And as it seems nothing could have been more improbable than that success should have followed the measure, had the king adopted it. But the thing was of the Lord. Reader! do not fail to remark from it, how truly awful it must be, to be given up to a deluded mind.

27 Then came all the princes unto Jeremiah, and asked him: and he told them according to all these words that the king had commanded: so they left off speaking with him, for the matter was not perceived.

28 So Jeremiah abode in the court of the prison, until the day that Jerusalem was taken: and he was there when Jerusalem was taken.

The poor Prophet is hunted like the partridge upon the mountains. But though in the midst of foes, yet in no real danger. As he was before the siege, so through the whole of it; and so in the end. So the Lord had promised: and so he found. Jeremiah i. 18, 19.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! we peruse this portion of God's holy word to little purpose, if so be that we do not, under his divine teaching, gather from it the blessed instructions it holds forth. For what is it that we behold in the different characters then, but the same as we behold in the different characters now; that the Lord's children are conformed to his lovely image; and the children of the evil one to Satan their master. Their malice is against Christ and therefore it is manifested to his people. As then saith an Apostle, speaking of the days of old, *he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit, even so it is now.* And so it will go on, until time shall be no more. And then the Lord will come, and take out of his kingdom all things that offend. Blessed Lord Jesus! I would say both for myself and Reader; give us to know, and see clearly, the marks of our adoption character. Let our souls discover, that our spots are the spots of God's children. And then, like Paul, like Jeremiah, like all the faithful gone before, we shall be enabled to say, *though bonds and imprisonment await us, yet none of these things will move us; neither shall we count our life dear to ourselves so that we finish our course with joy, and the calling we have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God.*

CHAP. XXXIX.

CONTENTS.

We are now arrived at the long predicted event, the taking of the city. Zedekiah hath his eyes put out; and all the people are made prisoners.

IN the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, came Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon and all his army against Jerusalem, and they besieged it.

2 *And* in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, the ninth *day* of the month, the city was broken up.

3 *And* all the princes of the king of Babylon came in, and sat in the middle gate, *even* Nergal-sharezar, Samgar-nebo, Sarsechim, Rab-saris, Nergal-sharezar, Rab-mag, with all the residue of the princes of the king of Babylon.

See here the confirmation of God's word; and the fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophecy: and behold in it also, a full refutation of the false and lying prophets. And thus, Reader, depend upon it, will be the final accomplishment of all God's promises of salvation to the people of God, and everlasting destruction to all his enemies.

4 ¶ And it came to pass, *that* when Zedekiah the king of Judah saw them, and all the men of war, then they fled, and went forth out of the city by night, by the way of the king's garden, by the gate betwixt the two walls: and he went out the way of the plain.

5 But the Chaldeans' army pursued after them, and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho: and when they had taken him, they brought him up to Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he gave judgment upon him.

6 Then the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah in Riblah, before his eyes: also the king of Babylon slew all the nobles of Judah.

7 Moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with chains to carry him to Babylon.

8 ¶ And the Chaldeans burnt the king's house, and the houses of the people with fire, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem.

9 Then Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carried away captive into Babylon the remnant of the people that remained in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to him, with the rest of the people that remained.

What a sad business Zedekiah had made of it; and what a grievous calamity followed! Zedekiah was but in the prime of life when these things took place. And here he felt the awful consequence of rejecting the counsel of God against his own soul. His eyes allowed him to behold his little ones, and nobles, all slain; and then darkness as to this world, closed in upon him for ever. Reader! pause and contemplate the still greater calamity of the hardened sinner, when all earthly comforts are departing from him; and the everlasting darkness of death and eternal misery, are sealing up his soul at the last day!

10 But Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard left of the poor of the people, which had nothing,

in the land of Judah, and gave them vineyards and fields at the same time.

I read this verse by itself, to remark distinguishing mercies. The poor also in a spiritual sense, who have nothing, find all things in Jesus!

11 ¶ Now Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard, saying,

12 Take him, and look well to him, and do him no harm; but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee.

13 So Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard sent, and Nebushasban, Rab-saris, and Nergal-sharezar, Rab-mag, and all the king of Babylon's princes:

14 Even they sent, and took Jeremiah out of the court of the prison, and committed him unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, that he should carry him home: so he dwelt among the people.

Behold the care the Lord takes of his people, agreeably to his promise, chap. xv. 11. And is it not so in all ages? Oh! Reader, never lose sight of the blessed doctrine that ariseth out of this scripture. *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly.* 2 Peter ii. 9. Psalm cv. 14, 15.

15 ¶ Now the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah, while he was shut up in the court of the prison, saying,

16 Go, and speak to Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring my words upon this city for evil, and not for good, and they shall be *accomplished* in that day before thee.

17 But I will deliver thee in that day, saith the LORD: and thou shalt not be given into the hand of the men of whom thou *art* afraid.

18 For I will surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be

for a prey unto thee: because thou hast put thy trust in me, saith the LORD.

It should seem that *Ebed-melech*, notwithstanding his boldness in Jeremiah's cause, (see Chap. xxxviii. 7—13.) was timid concerning the threatened judgments of God upon Jerusalem. The Lord hath special respect to the fearful minds of his little ones. His grace shall be sufficient for them; and his strength shall be according to their weakness. It is blessed to know this; and doubly blessed to rely upon it in Christ.

REFLECTIONS.

Who would have believed (saith the Prophet) among the kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, that the adversary and the enemy should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem! But the cause is immediately given. For the sins of her prophets, and the iniquities of her priests, it is that which hath shed the blood of the just in the midst of her. But Reader! behold not only in this history, but in the history of all the earth, what sin hath wrought. It was sin that caused the destruction of the old world by a flood! It was sin that gave rise to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire. And it is sin, by which death hath entered into the circumstances of all mankind, and destroys all, because all have sinned. And would you see a yet more tremendous display of the effects of sin, than the everlasting destruction of rebellious men and angels, put all together; behold it in the death of Christ; when he *who knows no sin became sin and a curse for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*. Yea, Reader, in the Son of God taking upon him our nature, and dying, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God, there is a greater manifestation of the awful nature of sin, than the overthrow and annihilation of all the creation of God would have been in proof!

Pause then, my soul, over these solemn considerations! Behold the judgments against sin, going on throughout the earth! Look at the effects of sin, in the sorrows, and wars, and carnage, and miseries, both in private life and public bodies. And when the full influence of these solemn things are suitably felt in thine own apprehension, look unto Jesus, the only refuge and consolation under all. Oh! for grace to know him, who *by death hath destroyed him that had the power of death; and delivered them who through fear of death are all their life time subject to bondage*.

CHAP. XL.

CONTENTS.

We have here some of the events which took place at Jerusalem, immediately after the city was taken. The history is carried on.

THE word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, after that Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah, when he had taken him, being bound in chains among all that were carried away captive of Jerusalem and Judah, which were carried away captive unto Babylon.

2 And the captain of the guard took Jeremiah, and said unto him, The LORD thy God hath pronounced this evil upon this place.

3 Now the LORD hath brought *it*, and done according as he hath said : because ye have sinned against the LORD, and have not obeyed his voice, therefore this thing is come upon you.

4 And now, behold, I loose thee this day from the chains which *were* upon thine hand : if it seem good unto thee to come with me into Babylon, come ; and I will look well unto thee : but if it seem ill unto thee to come with me into Babylon, forbear : behold, all the land *is* before thee : whither it seemeth good and convenient for thee to go, thither go.

5 Now while he was not yet gone back, *he said*, Go back also to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon hath made governor over the cities of Judah, and dwell with him among the people : or go wheresoever it seemeth convenient unto thee to go. So the captain of the guard gave him victuals and a reward, and let him go.

6 Then went Jeremiah unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam to Mizpah ; and dwelt with him among the people *that were* left in the land.

It is blessed to trace the Lord's providences over the Lord's people. Here was Jeremiah, enjoying more freedom and happiness from the appointment of enemies, than he had from professed friends. I pray the Reader, however, not to overlook the cause, in the Lord's appointment. How fully was that scripture proved : Prov. xvi. 7.

7 ¶ Now when all the captains of the forces which *were* in the fields, *even* they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam governor in the land, and had committed unto him men, and women, and children, and of the poor of the land, of them that were not carried away captive to Babylon ;

8 Then they came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth, and the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, and Jezaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men.

9 And Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, sware unto them, and to their men, saying, Fear not to serve the Chaldeans : dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you.

10 As for me, behold, I will dwell at Mizpah, to serve the Chaldeans, which will come unto us : but ye, gather ye wine, and summer-fruits, and oil, and put *them* in your vessels, and dwell in your cities that ye have taken.

11 Likewise when all the Jews that *were* in Moab, and among the Ammonites, and in Edom, and that *were* in all the countries, heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant of Judah, and that he had set over them Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan ;

12 Even all the Jews returned out of all places whither they were driven, and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah, unto Mizpah, and gathered wine, and summer-fruits, very much,

It appears by the appointment of one of their own people among the Jews to be Governor, that the King of Babylon meant kindness to the lower orders of the people, though he had slain their king and nobles. And the gathering of the Summer fruits for themselves seems to have been a confirmation of it.

13 ¶ Moreover, Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that *were* in the fields, came to Gedaliah to Mizpah.

14 And said unto him, Dost thou certainly know that Baalis the king of the Ammonites hath sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to slay thee? But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam believed them not.

15 Then Johanan the son of Kareah spake to Gedaliah in Mizpah secretly, saying, Let me go, I pray thee, and I will slay Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and no man shall know *it*: wherefore should he slay thee, that all the Jews, *which are* gathered unto thee, should be scattered, and the remnant of Judah perish?

16 But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam said unto Johanan the son of Kareah, Thou shalt not do this thing: for thou speakest falsely of Ishmael.

We have here the information of a conspiracy: but the accomplishment is not related in this Chapter. In the succeeding one it is. Alas! neither mercies nor judgments; the fear of death nor of hell, find their influence on some men's minds. Oh! what a wretched, fallen, depraved state, hath our nature sunk into by sin!

REFLECTIONS.

I **BEG** the Reader to make a solemn pause over this Chapter, and to remark, how soon a sense of divine judgments lose their effect; except divine grace keep the remembrance of them, with all their blessed consequences, alive in our hearts. Who should have conceived that after so alarming a visitation, in the putting out the eyes of the king, and carrying him and his nobles away into captivity, with all the residue of the people excepting the poor, that rebellion and disaffection should have sprung up among them. But so it is. There can be no change but what grace makes. And much it is to be feared, that if the miserable in everlasting chains, under darkness to the judgment of the great day, were once again to be permitted to come on earth, their minds would be the same, and the sin and malignity of their nature remain unchanged. Lord Jesus! give to

thy people that *new heart*, and that *new mind*, in which the new birth consists: that by regeneration they may be prepared for the everlasting enjoyment of thee in glory; since thou thyself hast said, without it, *we cannot see the kingdom of God!*

C H A P. XLI.

CONTENTS.

The treachery spoken of in the preceding chapter, is said in this to have been accomplished. Gedaliah the new governor is slain; and much confusion followeth.

NOW it came to pass in the seventh month, *that* Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, and the princes of the king, even ten men with him, came unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam to Mizpah, and there they did eat bread together in Mizpah.

2 Then arose Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and the ten men that were with him, and smote Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan with the sword, and slew him, whom the king of Babylon had made governor over the land.

3 Ishmael also slew all the Jews that were with him, *even* with Gedaliah at Mizpah, and the Chaldeans that were found there, *and* the men of war.

I know not, Reader, what reflections the Lord awakens in your mind while prosecuting this sad history. But will not such a view of the horrible cruelty of the human mind, make a man blush to belong to it? Can it be the same nature, equally disposed to the same crimes, unrestrained by grace, in all the fallen race of Adam? Oh! how precious, when under this conviction, is the consideration of our interest in, and relationship to, the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ!

4 And it came to pass the second day after he had slain Gedaliah, and no man knew *it*,

5 That there came certain from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria, *even* fourscore men, having their beards shaven, and their clothes rent, and having cut themselves, with offerings and in-

cense in their hand, to bring *them* to the house of the LORD.

6 And Ishmael the son of Nethaniah went forth from Mizpah to meet them, weeping all along as he went : and it came to pass as he met them, he said unto them, Come to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam.

7 And it was *so*, when they came into the midst of the city, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah slew them, *and cast them* into the midst of the pit, he, and the men that *were* with him.

8 But ten men were found among them, that said unto Ishmael, Slay us not : for we have treasures in the field, of wheat, and of barley, and of oil, and of honey : so he forbore, and slew them not among their brethren.

9 Now the pit wherein Ishmael had cast all the dead bodies of the men, whom he had slain because of Gedaliah, *was* it which Asa the king had made for fear of Baasha king of Israel ; *and* Ishmael the son of Nethaniah filled it with *them that were* slain.

Was there ever a monster of iniquity further gone in the lust of human blood, than this *Ishmael* ? The Prophet doth not fail to tell us that he was of the seed royal ! Oh ! how disgraceful, had he been of the offspring of the dung-hill. But, Reader ! do not overlook the common stock of sin, by whatever temporary distinctions they are known. Here there is one common level ; and it is grace alone that makes a difference.

10 Then Ishmael carried away captive all the residue of the people that *were* in Mizpah, *even* the king's daughters, and all the people that remained in Mizpah, whom Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard had committed to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, and Ishmael the son of Nethaniah carried them away captive, and departed to go over to the Ammonites.

11 ¶ But when Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that *were* with

him, heard of all the evil that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had done,

12 Then they took all the men, and went to fight with Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and found him by the great waters that *are* in Gibeon.

13 Now it came to pass, *that* when all the people which *were* with Ishmael saw Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that *were* with him, then they were glad.

14 So all the people that Ishmael had carried away captive from Mizpah, cast about and returned, and went unto Johanan the son of Kareah.

15 But Ishmael the son of Nethaniah escaped from Johanan with eight men, and went to the Ammonites.

16 Then took Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that *were* with him, all the remnant of the people whom he had recovered from Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, from Mizpah (after *that* he had slain Gedaliah the son of Ahikam) *even* mighty men of war, and the women, and the children, and the eunuchs, whom he had brought again from Gibeon :

17 And they departed and dwelt in the habitation of Chimham, which *is* by Beth-lehem, to go to enter into Egypt,

18 Because of the Chaldeans: for they were afraid of them, because Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had slain Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon made governor in the land.

It is hardly possible, but to take part with satisfaction on the success of *Johanan*, in the recovery of the Captives. Nevertheless, what is the sum and substance of the history, but *potsherds striving with potsherds*; and the Lord's cause, and the Lord's glory, becoming the object of neither. Behold, Reader! as we prosecute the history, we only read more and more of man's ruin and apostacy from God.

Well might the Prophet Jeremiah be called the *mournful* Prophet, for every one that reads the history of his day, and feels concerned for the Lord's glory, must find cause to mourn also. Lament. i. 20.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! the great relief to a Child of God, when turning over continued pages in the word of God in relating man's depravity, is the view of Jesus, who was manifested, as an apostle saith, *to take away our sin, and in him is no sin*. Precious Lord Jesus! I would ask, both for myself and Reader! what could support the soul, under the consciousness of one common nature of evil, but the consciousness also, that thy people have one common nature of righteousness in thee? *As by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one, many were made righteous*. Every way, and by every view, to which the mind directs her attention, in *Zedekiah, Ishmael*, and all the residue of the people, we see nothing but evil; and in ourselves feel the breaking out of the same. But in thee, blessed Jesus, we behold a fulness of grace and truth; and those graces abounding for thy people. Oh! Lord! give both to him that writes, and to him that reads, if it be thy blessed will, the needed grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ; that of thy fulness we may all receive and grace for grace. Amen!

CHAP. XLII.

CONTENTS.

We have in this Chapter, a renewed instance of the incorrigible hardness of the human heart, void of divine grace. Johanan pretendeth to seek after God, and enquireth of the Prophet. Jeremiah kindly tells the people, but in vain.

THEN all the captains of the forces, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and Jezaniah the son of Hoshaiah, and all the people from the least even unto the greatest, came near,

2 And said unto Jeremiah the prophet, Let, we beseech thee, our supplication be accepted before thee, and pray for us unto the LORD thy God, *even* for all this remnant (for we are left *but* a few of many, as thine eyes do behold us)

3 That the LORD thy God may shew us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do.

Hitherto the character of Johanan seems to have been fair. The zeal he manifested against Ishmael, and the recovery of the captives,

is well succeeded by this enquiry. But alas! what sincerity is there in man? The Lord hath given a representation of all such characters, by his servant the Prophet. Ezek. xxxiii. 30—32.

4 Then Jeremiah the prophet said unto them, I have heard *you*: behold, I will pray unto the LORD your God according to your words; and it shall come to pass, *that* whatsoever thing the LORD shall answer you, I will declare *it* unto you: I will keep nothing back from you.

5 Then they said to Jeremiah, The LORD be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not even according to all things for the which the LORD thy God shall send thee to us.

6 Whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God to whom we send thee; that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the LORD our God.

Nothing can be more promising than this engagement on both sides. We shall see how the matter ends.

7 ¶ And it came to pass after ten days that the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah.

8 Then called he Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces which *were* with him, and all the people, from the least even to the greatest,

9 And said unto them, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, unto whom ye have sent me to present your supplication before him,

10 If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull *you* down, and I will plant you, and not pluck *you* up: for I repent me of the evil that I have done unto you.

11 Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom ye are afraid: be not afraid of him, saith the LORD: for I *am* with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand.

12 And I will shew mercies unto you, that he

may have mercy upon you, and cause you to return to your own land.

13 ¶ But if ye say, We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the LORD your God,

14 Saying, No, but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread; and there will we dwell:

15 (And now therefore hear the word of the LORD, ye remnant of Judah, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, If ye wholly set your faces to enter into Egypt, and go to sojourn there)

16 Then it shall come to pass, *that* the sword which ye feared, shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine whereof ye were afraid, shall follow close after you there in Egypt, and there ye shall die.

17 So shall it be with all the men that set their faces to go into Egypt to sojourn there, they shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: and none of them shall remain or escape from the evil that I will bring upon them.

18 For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, As mine anger and my fury hath been poured forth upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem: so shall my fury be poured forth upon you, when ye shall enter into Egypt: and ye shall be an execration, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach, and ye shall see this place no more.

Reader! do remark the graciousness of God. And recollect, that from the first threatenings, such was the uniform language the Lord used. And had Zedekiah listened to it, what calamities would have been spared. But, Reader, do not overlook also the personal interest that we have, in the present hour, to the same truths. If sinners look stedfastly to Jesus, and trust to his righteousness, and stay themselves upon it, without an eye to the righteousness of the creature, their salvation would be also near. But if we make the reeds of

Egypt our confidence, instead of the Rock of Ages, what is this but the same conduct as Johanan, and the people with him.

19 ¶ The LORD hath said concerning you, O ye remnant of Judah: Go ye not into Egypt: know certainly, that I have admonished you this day.

20 For ye dissembled in your hearts, when ye sent me unto the LORD your God, saying, Pray for us unto the LORD our God: and according unto all that the LORD our God shall say, so declare unto us, and we will do *it*.

21 And *now* I have this day declared *it* to you: but ye have not obeyed the voice of the LORD your God, nor any *thing* for the which he hath sent me unto you.

22 Now therefore know certainly, that ye shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, in the place whither ye desire to go, *and* to sojourn.

I cannot sufficiently admire the faithfulness of the Prophet, in times of such general danger. What an uniformity Jeremiah manifested, in his office of speaking the truths of God. Oh! for the Lord to give his Church, in all ages, faithful ministers like him, whether men will bear, or whether they will forbear!

REFLECTIONS.

READER! you and I shall lose all the beauties of these scriptures, if from the representation here made of the Church, in the days of Jeremiah, we do not gather instruction, to suit the Church in our's. Depend upon it in all ages, more or less, it is the same. Oh! how doth Zion languish! How are the glorious distinguishing truths of our holy faith kept back, or believed only in part! And as these pillars, and ground of the truth, are but coolly received; so in proportion, like Johanan and his party, we are looking more to an arm of flesh for our confidence, than to the living God. Thus turning from one creature to another, we seek salvation from any, and from every resource, rather than the one great and finished redemption of Jesus! Oh that the Lord would give his people grace, that in the present hour the advice of Jeremiah might be followed; that we may abide in Christ, that the Lord might build us up, and plant us in the glorious salvation by Jesus! For then when the Lord comes to bless his land and people, he will bring with him grace to pardon, grace to renew, grace to sanctify, grace to save, and an abundance of grace, to

enable us to triumph over all our enemies. Precious Lord! fulfil all thy merciful dispensations towards us, and return to thy people, as thou hast said, a pure language, that *they may call upon the name of the Lord with one consent.*

CHAP. XLIII.

CONTENTS.

The awful rejection of the Prophet's advice, by Johanan and his party, is related in this Chapter: and with daring impiety he and his followers carry Jeremiah, and the remnant of the people by force into Egypt.

AND it came to pass, *that* when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking unto all the people, all the words of the LORD their God, for which the LORD their God had sent him to them, *even* all these words,

2 Then spake Azariah the son of Hoshaiah, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the proud men, saying unto Jeremiah, Thou speakest falsely; the LORD our God hath not sent thee to say, Go not into Egypt to sojourn there:

3 But Baruch the son of Neriah setteth thee on against us, for to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that they might put us to death, and carry us away captives into Babylon.

Reader! mark in the progress of the history, the truth of that scripture; as *Jannes* and *Jambres* withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth, men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith, *2 Tim. iii. 8.* How awful the state of judicial blindness!

4 So Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, and all the people, obeyed not the voice of the LORD, to dwell in the land of Judah.

5 But Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, took all the remnant of Judah, that were returned from all nations, whither they had been driven, to dwell in the land of Judah;

6 *Even* men, and women, and children, and the king's daughters, and every person that Ne-

buzar-adan the captain of the guard had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Jeremiah the prophet, and Baruch the son of Neriah.

7 So they came into the land of Egypt: for they obeyed not the voice of the LORD; thus came they, *even* to Tahpanhes.

To what a desperate degree of boldness in sin, doth sin harden! It is somewhat extraordinary however, under all, that the life of the Prophet is so sacred. The reason is assigned us: Jeremiah i. 19.

8 ¶ Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying,

9 Take great stones in thine hand, and hide them in the clay in the brick-kiln, which is at the entry of Pharaoh's house at Tahpanhes, in the sight of the men of Judah:

10 And say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid, and he shall spread his royal pavilion over them.

11 And when he cometh, he shall smite the land of Egypt, *and deliver such as are* for death, to death; and *such as are* for captivity, to captivity; and *such as are* for the sword, to the sword.

12 And I will kindle a fire in the houses of the gods of Egypt, and he shall burn them and carry them away captives: and he shall array himself with the land of Egypt, as a shepherd putteth on his garment, and he shall go forth from thence in peace.

13 He shall break also the images of Bethshemesh, that is in the land of Egypt: and the houses of the gods of the Egyptians shall he burn with fire.

Reader! look at God's people in their vassalage: part of them in Babylon, and part in Egypt! Is this the Lord's heritage? Well might the Prophet use his lamentations in the way he hath, and

pour out his soul in prayer, see Lament. v. throughout. But, Reader! in the midst of judgments do not overlook how the Lord's grace follows the people. Jeremiah is still to preach, and still to prophesy. And although evil must come, yet goodness shall follow. Pray read Jerem. xxxii. 37 to the end.

REFLECTIONS.

My soul! do not close this book of God, neither pass away from this Chapter, without first dropping in prayer before the mercy seat, for the continual leadings, and preventing, and restraining influences of the Holy Spirit. Who can read the astonishing hardness of the human heart, as set forth in the relation of *Johanan* and his followers, without trembling? Who would have supposed it possible, that when a nation for its impiety had been given up by the Lord to the sword, the remnant should have set forth yet more outrages and marks of rebellion against God! But, alas! what is man in his highest attainments, if for a moment left of God! The best of men are but men, and are equally capable of falling: for corruption is the same in all men, by nature. And, my soul, never for a moment lose sight of that most certain and unquestionable truth, that they that are kept, *are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.* And that thou art not like *Johanan* and his party, is not owing to thee, or to thy prudence, but wholly to the merciful grace of the Lord. Oh! for grace to seek grace, and to be on the look out for the sweet visits of him and his love, who alone keepeth from falling, and will present his people before his throne faultless, with exceeding great joy. Precious Jesus! do thou keep me, and I shall be kept. And grant Lord, that I may never grieve *the Holy Spirit of God*; whereby thy people *are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

CHAP. XLIV.

CONTENTS.

The Prophet is here preaching, though in Egypt, in the same strain of reproof as before. And the Lord foretells by him the destruction of that kingdom.

THE word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews which dwell in the land of Egypt, which dwell at Migdol, and at Tahpanhes and at Noph, and in the country of Pathros, saying,

2 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Ye have seen all the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, and upon all the cities

of Judah; and behold, this day they *are* a desolation, and no man dwelleth therein,

3 Because of their wickedness which they have committed to provoke me to anger, in that they went to burn incense, *and* to serve other gods whom they knew not, *neither* they, ye, nor your fathers.

4 Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending *them*, saying, Oh do not this abominable thing that I hate.

5 But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense unto other gods.

6 Wherefore my fury and mine anger was poured forth, and was kindled in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, and they are wasted *and* desolate, as at this day.

7 Therefore now thus saith the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel, Wherefore commit ye *this* great evil against your souls, to cut off from you man and woman, child and suckling, out of Judah, to leave you none to remain;

8 In that ye provoke me unto wrath with the works of your hands, burning incense unto other gods in the land of Egypt, whither ye be gone to dwell, that ye might cut yourselves off, and that ye might be a curse, and a reproach among all the nations of the earth?

9 Have ye forgotten the wickedness of your fathers, and the wickedness of the kings of Judah, and the wickedness of their wives, and your own wickedness, and the wickedness of your wives, which they have committed in the land of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem?

10 They are not humbled *even* unto this day, neither have they feared, nor walked in my law,

nor in my statutes that I set before you, and before your fathers,

11 ¶ Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts the God of Israel, Behold I will set my face against you for evil, and to cut off all Judah.

12 And I will take the remnant of Judah that have set their faces to go into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, and they shall all be consumed, *and* fall in the land of Egypt, they shall *even* be consumed by the sword, *and* by the famine: they shall die, from the least even unto the greatest, by the sword, and by the famine: and they shall be an execration, *and* an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach.

13 For I will punish them that dwell in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence:

14 So that none of the remnant of Judah, which are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall escape or remain, that they should return into the land of Judah, to the which they have a desire to return to dwell there: for none shall return but such as shall escape,

Never surely could any thing be more gracious than the Lord's repeated expostulations with the people. The Lord follows them into Egypt, whither they had fled in direct defiance of God's word; and yet even here, the same patience and long suffering is set forth. Reader! do not overlook, in Israel's history, our own. Every part and portion of God's word, and every providence, preacheth now as much as then, to the same amount; *I am God, and not man, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.* Malachi iii. 9.

15 ¶ Then all the men which knew that their wives had burnt incense unto other gods, and all the women that stood by, a great multitude, even all the people that dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying,

16 *As for* the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee.

17 But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for *then* had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil.

18 But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, we have wanted all *things*; and have been consumed by the sword, and by the famine.

19 And when we burnt incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink-offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink-offerings unto her without our men?

While we remark the patience and long suffering of the Lord; are we not compelled no less to remark, and be astonished at the impudence, and incorrigible hardness of the human heart? Was there ever an example of more daring impiety, than what is here represented? Alas! how sin hardens. Well may every poor sinner, who reads it, exclaim in the language of that prayer, *from pride and hardness of heart, and contempt of thy word; good Lord, deliver us!* The idol here spoken of, the queen of heaven, to whom the wives of the people paid homage, very probably, was the Moon. Under the influence of this planet, they conceived, that they had favourable seasons. And it is likely, that in conjunction with the Moon, they worshipped also the other heavenly bodies—Alas! how fallen! Acts vii. 42, 43, 44.

20 ¶ Then Jeremiah said unto all the people, to the men, and to the women, and to all the people which had given him *that* answer, saying,

21 The incense that ye burned in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, ye and your fathers, your kings and your princes, and the people of the land, did not the LORD remember them, and came it *not* into his mind?

22 So that the LORD could no longer bear, because of the evil of your doings, *and* because of the abominations which ye have committed:

therefore is your land a desolation, and an astonishment, and a curse without an inhabitant, as at this day.

23 Because ye have burnt incense, and because ye have sinned against the LORD, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD, nor walked in his law, nor in his statutes, nor in his testimonies: therefore this evil is happened unto you, as at this day.

Here the Lord compels them to look back; and trace the causes of all their past calamity. The idolatry of themselves, and their fathers, had already brought upon them, and their land, the awful judgments which had prompted them to flee into Egypt.

24 Moreover, Jeremiah said unto all the people, and to all the women, Hear the word of the LORD, all Judah that *are* in the land of Egypt.

25 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, Ye and your wives have both spoken with your mouths, and fulfilled with your hand, saying, We will surely perform our vows that we have vowed, to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her: ye will surely accomplish your vows, and surely perform your vows.

26 Therefore hear ye the word of the LORD, all Judah that dwell in the land of Egypt, Behold, I have sworn by my great name, saith the LORD, that my name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah, in all the land of Egypt, saying, The LORD God liveth.

27 Behold, I will watch over them for evil, and not for good, and all the men of Judah, that *are* in the land of Egypt, shall be consumed by the sword, and by the famine, until there be an end of them.

28 Yet a small number that escape the sword, shall return out of the land of Egypt into the land of Judah; and all the remnant of Judah, that

are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall know whose word shall stand, mine or theirs.

29 ¶ And this *shall be* a sign unto you, saith the LORD, that I will punish you in this place, that ye may know that my words shall surely stand against you for evil.

30 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will give Pharaoh-hophra king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies, and into the hand of them that seek his life; as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon his enemy, and that sought his life.

Here the Lord calls upon them to be prepared for the destruction of Egypt. No place, no kingdom shall give shelter to those whom God will punish. In their own land, or in the land of strangers, the Lord will find them out, and will punish them. *There is no darkness nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.* Job. xxxiv. 22.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! we are engaged, in the perusal of this Chapter, in a most solemn and awful history. Israel, given up to idolatry, and their neck hardened against all the calls of the Lord's long suffering and patience. Let us pause over it, and remark the tremendous and fearful condition of such a state. There is, indeed, in every man, by nature, a blindness, an ignorance, and even an enmity, against God. Our wills, our inclinations, our faculties, are all on the side of rebellion; and until an act of grace is wrought upon the heart, there is none that will seek after God. But, when added to this, a *judicial* blindness follows, this is most alarming indeed! Thus the Lord by his servant proclaims, *My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me.* Intimating the natural hardness and impenitency of the heart, shut up in unbelief. *So I gave them up unto their own heart's lusts; and they walked in their own counsels.* As if the Lord had said, *Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone!* Oh! precious, precious Lord Jesus! thou that art the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof! blessed for ever be thy gracious interposition, in coming to take away sin by the sacrifice of thyself! Lord! open our hearts, and keep them open by thy grace, that they may never more be shut against thee!

CHAP. XLV.

CONTENTS.

We have here a short, but precious Chapter, in which Baruch, being dismayed at his situation in Egypt, is comforted by the Prophet.

THE word that Jeremiah the prophet spake unto Baruch the son of Neriah, when he had written these words in a book at the mouth of Jeremiah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, saying,

2 Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, unto thee, O Baruch,

3 Thou didst say, Woe is me now! for the LORD hath added grief to my sorrow, I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest.

We had an account of this *Baruch* in the thirty-sixth Chapter of this same prophecy; and here, in a short, but instructive manner, his history is again brought forward. It appears, that though a follower of the Lord God of Israel, he had but weak faith. He lived in continual apprehension of danger, and from the surrounding calamities was full of fear, that evil would befall him. Reader! it is astonishing how much even good men suffer from imaginary fears; and what troubles the faithful bring upon themselves from not always living above these fears, by living upon faith in Christ. That is a sweet promise, which ought to be worn in the bosom of a child of God, for every occasion: Isaiah xxvi. 3. And it was an old saying of the primitive Christians, "he that lives by faith, will never die by fear."

4 ¶ Thus shalt thou say unto him, The LORD saith thus, Behold, *that* which I have built, will I break down; and that which I have planted, I will pluck up, even this whole land.

5 And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek *them* not: for behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the LORD: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest.

I have often found this gracious answer of the Lord, by his servant Baruch, very profitable. Shall the children of God, while going home to their Father's house, and conscious that they are passing through a wilderness, expect velvet paths, and the easiest accommodation, by the way? Reader! in a world like this, where desolations are all around, let us bless God if we escape the storm. Amidst general shipwreck, let us consider our lot peculiarly favoured that we are not stranded, or overwhelmed with the waves.

REFLECTIONS.

PRECIOUS Lord Jesus! it is enough that thou art my portion; Oh! let me seek no great things beside. To have my spiritual life secured, and my natural life given me for a prey, in such a world as this, where the arrows of death are flying around in every direction; Lord, help me to consider these as distinguishing mercies; and by faith to live on thee now, and ere long to enjoy the full fruition of thee in glory; oh! what marked and distinguishing grace is mine. And now, Lord! I pray thee, let *Baruch's* history continually furnish out subject of instruction; for in having thee, O Lord, I really and truly possess all things.

C H A P. XLVI.

CONTENTS.

Egypt is here threatened, and Babylon is pointed to as her conqueror, In the close of the Chapter the Lord comforts his people.

THE word of the LORD which came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Gentiles.

2 Against Egypt, against the army of Pharaoh-necho king of Egypt, which was by the river Euphrates in Carchemish, which Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon smote in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah.

3 Order ye the buckler and shield, and draw near to battle.

4 Harness the horses, and get up, ye horsemen, and stand forth with *your* helmets, furbish the spears, *and* put on the brigandines.

5 Wherefore have I seen them dismayed, *and* turned away back? and their mighty ones are beaten down, and are fled apace, and look not back: *for* fear *was* round about, saith the LORD.

6 Let not the swift flee away, nor the mighty man escape; they shall stumble and fall toward the north, by the river Euphrates.

7 Who *is* this *that* cometh up as a flood, whose waters are moved as the rivers?

8 Egypt riseth up like a flood, and *his* waters are moved like the rivers: and he saith, I will go

up, *and* will cover the earth; I will destroy the city, and the inhabitants thereof.

9 Come up, ye horses; and rage, ye chariots; and let the mighty men come forth: the Ethiopians, and the Libyans that handle the shield, and the Lydians that handle *and* bend the bow.

10 For this *is* the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate, and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates.

11 Go up into Gilead, and take balm, O virgin, the daughter of Egypt: in vain shalt thou use many medicines: *for* thou shalt not be cured.

12 The nations have heard of thy shame, and thy cry hath filled the land: for the mighty man hath stumbled against the mighty, *and* they are fallen both together.

At this Chapter begins the judgments of God against the enemies of Israel. The Lord hath had a long controversy with his people; but now in the midst of it, he will reckon with their foes. And first for Egypt. This kingdom must come down, and the Lord will accomplish it by the king of Babylon: thus making one enemy of Israel to ruin another. Reader! mark some of the same things in the present hour. The Lord never wants a scourge to correct when his wisdom sees it fit.

13 ¶ The word that the LORD spake to Jeremiah the prophet, how Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon should come *and* smite the land of Egypt.

14 Declare ye in Egypt, and publish in Migdol, and publish in Noph, and in Tahpanhes: say ye, Stand fast, and prepare thee: for the sword shall devour round about thee.

15 Why are thy valiant *men* swept away? they stood not, because the LORD did drive them.

16 He made many to fall, yea, one fell upon another: and they said, Arise, and let us go again

to our own people, and to the land of our nativity, from the oppressing sword.

17 They did cry there, Pharaoh king of Egypt *is but* a noise; he hath passed the time appointed.

18 *As* I live saith the King, whose name *is* the LORD of hosts, Surely as Tabor *is* among the mountains, and as Carmel by the sea, *so* shall he come.

19 Oh thou daughter dwelling in Egypt, furnish thyself to go into captivity: for Noph shall be waste and desolate without an inhabitant.

20 Egypt *is like* a very fair heifer, *but* destruction cometh: it cometh out of the north.

21 Also her hired men *are* in the midst of her, like fatted bullocks, for they also are turned back, *and* are fled away together: they did not stand, because the day of their calamity was come upon them, *and* the time of their visitation.

22 The voice thereof shall go like a serpent: for they shall march with an army, and come against her with axes, as hewers of wood.

23 They shall cut down her forest, saith the LORD, though it cannot be searched; because they are more than the grasshoppers, and *are* innumerable.

24 The daughter of Egypt shall be confounded; she shall be delivered into the hand of the people of the north.

25 The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saith Behold, I will punish the multitude of No, and Pharaoh, and Egypt, with their gods, and their kings; even Pharaoh, and *all* them that trust in him.

26 And I will deliver them into the hand of those that seek their lives, and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of his servants: and afterwards it shall

be inhabited, as in the days of old, saith the LORD.

If the Reader will compare scripture with scripture, which is always the most profitable way of reading the word of God; he will find, that what Jeremiah is here engaged in, Isaiah had been before him, and Ezekiel had no less the same commission. Isaiah lxvi. 14. Ezek. xxx. and xxxix.

27 But fear not thou, O my servant Jacob, and be not dismayed, O Israel: for behold, I will save thee from afar off, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and be in rest and at ease, and none shall make *him* afraid.

28 Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the LORD, for I *am* with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee; but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure: yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished.

I pray the Reader to pause over these sweet verses, and read them again and again: it is impossible to read them too often. The Lord had once before given the same blessed promises to his afflicted ones, Chap. xxx. 10, 11. but such is his grace, and the exceeding riches of his grace, that he will repeat the gracious assurances. And Reader! I pray you, as you read these verses, recollect, that they belong to the Israel of God, in all ages, even Jesus's Church for ever. Amidst all our unworthiness and rebellions, as in the Church's history, so in the Church's history through all ages, the Lord hath respect to his own glorious name, and to his Covenant promise in Christ. See the precious scriptures, Ezek. xx. and Romans xi.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let us pass by a thousand beauties, as they arise before us in this precious scripture, in God's destruction of all the enemies of his Church and people, to dwell upon that most blessed and gracious portion of it, in his tender mercies over his redeemed. Every part of the holy word tends to confirm what this most merciful passage so faithfully proclaims, that God's Jacob shall not finally be lost, nor his Israel forsaken. *Cast down* his children may be, when their sins and rebellions render chastisements necessary: but *cast off* they never can be; for how unworthy soever in themselves, they are beheld precious in Jesus. Oh! thou sin-bearing Lamb of God! what everlasting love and praises will the ages of eternity bring in to

thee, in an endless revenue of glory, when thou shalt have finally brought them all home, and for ever secured them beyond all future possibility of danger, in thine own eternal righteousness in thy kingdom!

CHAP. XLVII.

CONTENTS.

We have the same subject prosecuted through this Chapter as in the former. The Lord is about to punish Israel's enemies, and having begun with the Egyptians, he here declares the destruction of the Philistines.

THE word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Philistines, before that Pharaoh smote Gaza.

2 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, waters rise up out of the north, and shall be an overflowing flood, and shall overflow the land, and all that is therein; the city and them that dwell therein: then the men shall cry, and all the inhabitants of the land shall howl.

3 At the noise of the stamping of the hoofs of his strong horses, at the rushing of his chariots, and at the rumbling of his wheels, the fathers shall not look back to *their* children for feebleness of hands:

4 Because of the day that cometh to spoil all the Philistines, and to cut off from Tyrus and Zidon every helper that remaineth: for the LORD will spoil the Philistines, the remnant of the country of Caphtor.

We shall find this Chapter, as well as the several around it, truly profitable, if we spiritualize it. The *Egyptians* and *Philistines*, *Moab* and *Ammon*, were all sworn foes to the people of God from the beginning, and so their spawn continues through all ages. But, though the Lord causeth them to act as rods to correct his children with; yet, when he hath finished the correction, he will throw, (as parents do that punish their little ones,) the rod away. Here the Lord calls the Philistines to account, and gives some most awful threatenings concerning them. And thus the Lord hath said, he will deal with all the foes of his people, and finally bring them under their feet. Rom. xvi. 20. Isaiah xlix. 24, 25, 26.

5 Baldness is come upon Gaza ; Ashkelon is cut off *with* the remnant of their valley : how long wilt thou cut thyself ?

6 O thou sword of the LORD, how long *wilt it be* ere thou be quiet ? put up thyself into thy scabbard, rest and be still.

7 How can it be quiet, seeing the LORD hath given it a charge against Ashkelon, and against the sea shore ? there hath he appointed it.

I beg the Reader to remark with me, the beauty, as well as the power of this scripture. Calling to the sword to be quiet, is a fine image, to express the feelings of the Prophet, in the view of slaughter, even though of our enemies. Gracious feelings do not destroy natural ones, though they refine them. As men in one common nature, we tremble at the destruction of men ; but as the followers of the Lord, Christ's enemies are our enemies, and there can be nothing neutral in this war. *He that is not for me is against me.* These things will all be explained at last. But in the mean time, our duty is, to refer all to his unsearchable wisdom. *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ?*

REFLECTIONS.

METHINKS the Lord, the Holy Ghost, hath opened to the believer's view sweet instructions in this Chapter. Here we learn, that however long and oppressive the Philistines, in all ages and generations, may bear hatred, and shew forth their malice against the Lord's heritage, yet a day of reckoning is sure, and a time of recompense must come. The Lord may, and the Lord will correct his children when they offend, and with the rod of men, for so the Covenant of grace declares ; but all this shall be but in measure, while in the end their enemies will finally perish, and that for ever.

And is it not a gracious part also in God, to teach his people these precious truths, and to help them by such promises, even during their exercises, to live by faith in the expectation what the end shall be ? Oh ! for grace to watch and mark the unceasing tendencies of divine love in all his appointments. Surely the Lord doth *stay his rough wind, in the day of the east wind.* *By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged ; and this is all the fruit to take away sin.*

C H A P. XLVIII.

CONTENTS.

In this Chapter Moab is called to account, and a long and trying account it is. The last verse, however, (and probably in allusion to the Gentiles given to Christ in Moab,) closes with a gracious promise.

A GAINST Moab thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Woe unto Nebo! for it is spoiled: Kiriathaim is confounded *and* taken: Misgab is confounded and dismayed.

2 *There shall be no more praise of Moab: in Heshbon they have devised evil against it; come, and let us cut it off from being a nation: also thou shalt be cut down, O Madmen; the sword shall pursue thee.*

3 A voice of crying *shall be* from Horonaim, spoiling and great destruction.

4 Moab is destroyed; her little ones have caused a cry to be heard.

5 For in the going up of Luhith, continual weeping shall go up; for in the going down of Horonaim, the enemies have heard a cry of destruction.

6 Flee, save your lives, and be like the heath in the wilderness,

7 ¶ For because thou hast trusted in thy works, and in thy treasures, thou shalt also be taken, and Chemosh shall go forth into captivity, *with* his priests and his princes together.

8 And the spoiler shall come upon every city, and no city shall escape: the valley also shall perish, and the plain shall be destroyed, as the LORD hath spoken.

9 Give wings unto Moab, that it may flee and get away: for the cities thereof shall be desolate, without any to dwell therein.

10 Cursed *be* he that doeth the work of the

LORD deceitfully, and cursed *be* he that keepeth back his sword from blood.

11 ¶ Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity : therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed.

The Prophet Jeremiah, whom the Lord when giving him his commission, had set over the nations and over the kingdoms, (see Chap. i. 10.) is here arraigning, trying, and condemning Moab; and an awful condemnation it is. But what I particularly beg to notice in this account is, the cause assigned in this last-verse. *Moab hath been at ease from his youth.* Reader! mark, I beseech you, what the Lord saith. And this is the one fatal cause, both of the destruction of kingdoms and individuals, an unawakened, unregenerated state. Sinners continue sinners. They are at ease in Zion. *They have no changes,* saith the Psalmist, *therefore they fear not God.* Psalm. lv. 19. As they were born so they continue. Thus they live, and thus they die. Hence the old scent of the old nature remains! An awful state, and according to our Lord's account, impossible ever to enter the kingdom of heaven, John iii. 5.

12 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will send unto him wanderers that shall cause him to wander, and shall empty his vessels, and break their bottles.

13 And Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Beth-el their confidence.

14 ¶ How say ye, *We are* mighty and strong men for the war?

15 Moab is spoiled, and gone up *out of* her cities, and his chosen young men are gone down to the slaughter, saith the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts.

16 The calamity of Moab is near to come, and his affliction hasteth fast.

17 All ye that are about him bemoan him; and all ye that know his name, say, How is the strong staff broken, *and* the beautiful rod!

18 Thou daughter that dost inhabit Dibon, come down from *thy* glory, and sit in thirst; for

the spoiler of Moab shall come upon thee, *and* he shall destroy thy strong holds.

19 O inhabitant of Aroer, stand by the way, and espy: ask him that fleeth, and her that escapeth, *and* say, What is done?

20 Moab is confounded; for it is broken down: howl and cry; tell ye it in Arnon that Moab is spoiled,

21 And judgment is come upon the plain country; upon Holon, and upon Jahazah, and upon Mephaath,

22 And upon Dibon, and upon Nebo, and upon Beth-diblathaim,

23 And upon Kiriathaim, and upon Beth-gamul, and upon Beth-meon,

24 And upon Keriath, and upon Bozrah; and upon all the cities of the land of Moab, far or near.

25 The horn of Moab is cut off, and his arm is broken, saith the LORD.

26 ¶ Make ye him drunken: for he magnified *himself* against the LORD: Moab also shall wallow in his vomit, and he also shall be in derision.

27 For was not Israel a derision unto thee? was he found among thieves? for since thou spakest of him, thou skippest for joy.

28 O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities, and dwell in the rock, and be like the dove *that* maketh her nest in the sides of the hole's mouth.

29 We have heard the pride of Moab (he is exceeding proud) his loftiness, and his arrogancy, and his pride, and the haughtiness of his heart.

30 I know his wrath, saith the LORD: but *it shall not be so*; his lies shall not so effect *it*.

31 Therefore will I howl for Moab, and I will cry out for all Moab; *mine heart* shall mourn for the men of Kir-heres.

32 O vine of Sibmah, I will weep for thee with the weeping of Jazer; thy plants are gone over the sea, they reach *even* to the sea of Jazer: the spoiler is fallen upon thy summer fruits, and upon thy vintage.

33 And joy and gladness is taken from the plentiful field, and from the land of Moab; and I have caused wine to fail from the wine-presses: none shall tread with shouting; *their* shouting *shall be* no shouting.

34 From the cry of Heshbon *even* unto Elealeh, and *even* unto Jahaz, have they uttered their voice, from Zoar *even* unto Horonaim, *as* an heifer of three years old; for the waters also of Nimrim shall be desolate.

35 Moreover, I will cause to cease in Moab, saith the LORD, him that offereth in the high places, and him that burneth incense to his gods.

36 Therefore mine heart shall sound for Moab like pipes, and mine heart shall sound like pipes for the men of Kir-heres: because the riches *that* he hath gotten are perished.

37 For every head *shall be* bald, and every beard clipped: upon all the hands *shall be* cuttings, and upon the loins sackcloth.

38 *There shall be* lamentation generally upon all the housetops of Moab, and in the streets thereof: for I have broken Moab like a vessel wherein is no pleasure, saith the LORD.

39 They shall howl, *saying*, How is it broken down? how hath Moab turned the back with shame? so shall Moab be a derision and a dismaying to all them about him.

40 For thus saith the LORD; Behold, he shall fly as an eagle, and shall spread his wings over Moab.

41 Kerioth is taken, and the strong holds are

surprised, and the mighty men's hearts in Moab at that day shall be as the heart of a woman in her pangs.

42 And Moab shall be destroyed from *being* a people, because he hath magnified *himself* against the LORD.

43 Fear, and the pit, and the snare, *shall be* upon thee, O inhabitant of Moab, saith the LORD.

44 He that fleeth from the fear shall fall into the pit: and he that getteth up out of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for I will bring upon it, *even* upon Moab, the year of their visitation, saith the LORD.

45 They that fled stood under the shadow of Heshbon, because of the force: but a fire shall come forth out of Heshbon, and a flame from the midst of Sihon, and shall devour the corner of Moab, and the crown of the head of the tumultuous ones.

46 Woe be unto thee, O Moab! the people of Chemosh perisheth: for thy sons are taken captives, and thy daughters captives.

It would swell our Commentary to a length indeed, to enter minutely into the several branches of the visitations here set forth. Indeed it would only when done, tend to confirm what hardly needs further confirmation. God's foes must be accounted with, and destruction must overtake all the workers of iniquity. *Moab* as well as the *Philistines*, and all that oppose God in his purposes, will finally perish. That one blessed declaration sums up and answers all: *my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.* Isaiah xli. 10. Precious consideration to all the people of God!

47 ¶ Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days, saith the LORD. Thus far *is* the judgment of Moab.

I have reserved this sweet verse to be read by itself, as containing much mercy in the midst of judgment. Those who read it in reference only to temporal blessings, must own that God is gracious. And those who read it through the medium of spiritual blessings in Christ, may and will discover wonderful events, which may be supposed to be folded up in it, in relation to the Gentile Church. Isaiah xlix. 6.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! who, but must be struck with holy awe and reverence, that contemplates the Lord's judgments in the earth! And though from a conscious sense of being made a partaker of grace, cannot but find cause to be humbled, under a sense of sin and undeservings, and to rejoice with trembling.

It would be a blessed and sanctified use of all afflictions, judgments, and visitations, that we behold, or hear of, among nations, or families, or individuals: if, while we view the sorrows of others, we duly considered our deserts also. The Lord hath caused it to be recorded, for the solemn admonition of his Church and people, that *a fruitful land is turned into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.* And when we see, as that we do now see, nations, like Moab, convulsed and shaken to their very centre, for the wickedness and impiety of the people; surely our British Israel hath reason to humble herself before God, lest she should see also an enemy in her habitation. It will be blessed to him that writes and to him that reads, if Moab's sorrows here threatened, lead the hearts of both in prayer to God in Christ, that our minds may be always deeply affected with the sense of national sins, and the just apprehension of national judgments. *Oh Lord! I would say with the Prophet, spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thy heritage to reproach! Oh! grant that this our British Zion may never see the Golden Candlestick of the Gospel removed out of its place: neither the going down of the sun among our Prophets: but, oh! that the Lord, with whom alone is the residue of the Spirit, would turn to the people a pure language, that they might all call upon the name of the Lord to serve him with one consent.* Amen.

CHAP. XLIX.

CONTENTS.

The judgments of the Ammonites takes up the former part of this Chapter. In it we have also the condemnation of Edom, Damascus, Kedar, Hazor, and Elam.

CONCERNING the Ammonites, thus saith the LORD; Hath Israel no sons? hath he no heir? why *then* doth their king inherit Gad, and his people dwell in his cities?

2 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will cause an alarm of war to be heard in Rabbah of the Ammonites; and it shall be a desolate heap, and her daughters shall be burned with fire: then shall Israel be heir unto them that were his heirs, saith the LORD,

3 Howl, O Heshbon, for Ai is spoiled: cry, ye daughters of Rabbah, gird you with sackcloth: lament, and run to and fro by the hedges; for their king shall go into captivity, *and* his priests and his princes together.

4 Wherefore gloriest thou in the valleys, thy flowing valley, O backsliding daughter? that trusted in her treasures, *saying*, Who shall come unto me?

5 Behold, I will bring a fear upon thee, saith the LORD GOD of hosts, from all those that be about thee: and ye shall be driven out every man right forth; and none shall gather up him that wandereth.

6 And afterward I will bring again the captivity of the children of Ammon, saith the LORD.

The Chapter opens in a beautiful and striking manner, for the Lord himself, Israel's lawful Sovereign, demands, as in a court of justice, how, or wherefore it is, that the land he gave, (and as Lord and proprietor of the whole earth he had a right to give,) to Israel, is now possessed by the children of Ammon? What! saith the Lord, is it so, that Israel is childless, whose posterity God promised should be as the sand of the sea for multitude? That is impossible. And will any nation then dare to possess Israel's birth-right? If the Reader will compare this passage with other scriptures, he will see the ground upon which Jehovah brings this charge. Amos i. 13, 14, 15. Zeph. ii. 8—11. Reader! spiritualize the passage, and it will be yet more blessed. How shall the seed of Christ be ever dispossessed of their inheritance, when they are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ? Romans viii. 16, 17. I beg the Reader not to overlook the mercy promised to Ammon in the last verse of this passage, in the after-day dispensation. Surely we do not strain the scripture, when we refer it to the call of the Gentiles under Christ. Isaiah lxix. 6. Acts xi. 1—18.

7 ¶ Concerning Edom, thus saith the LORD of hosts; *Is* wisdom no more in Teman? is counsel perished from the prudent? is their wisdom vanished?

8 Flee ye, turn back, dwell deep, O inhabitants of Dedan: for I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him, the time *that* I will visit him.

9 If grape gatherers come to thee, would they

not leave *some* gleaning grapes? if thieves by night, they will destroy till they have enough.

10 But I have made Esau bare, I have uncovered his secret places, and he shall not be able to hide himself; his seed is spoiled, and his brethren and his neighbours, and he *is* not.

11 Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve *them* alive; and let thy widows trust in me.

12 For thus saith the LORD; Behold, they whose judgment *was* not to drink of the cup have assuredly drunken, and *art* thou he *that* shall altogether go unpunished? thou shalt not go unpunished, but thou shalt surely drink *of it*.

13 For I have sworn by myself, saith the LORD, that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse; and all the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes.

14 I have heard a rumour from the LORD, and an ambassador is sent unto the heathen, *saying*, Gather ye together, and come against her, and rise up to the battle.

15 For lo, I will make thee small among the heathen, *and* despised among men.

16 Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, *and* the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the LORD.

17 Also Edom shall be a desolation; every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof.

18 As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour *cities* thereof, saith the LORD, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it.

19 Behold, he shall come up like a lion from

the swelling of Jordan against the habitation of the strong : but I will suddenly make him run away from her : and who *is* a chosen man, that I may appoint over her ? for who *is* like me ? and who will appoint me the time ? and who *is* that shepherd that will stand before me ?

20 Therefore hear the counsel of the LORD, that he hath taken against Edom, and his purposes that he hath purposed against the inhabitants of Teman : surely the least of the flock shall draw them out : surely he shall make their habitations desolate with them.

21 The earth is moved at the noise of their fall : at the cry, the noise thereof was heard in the Red sea.

22 Behold, he shall come up and fly as the eagle, and spread his wings over Bozrah ; and at that day shall the heart of the mighty men of Edom be as the heart of a woman in her pangs.

23 ¶ Concerning Damascus : Hamath is confounded, and Arpad ; for they have heard evil tidings : they are faint-hearted : *there is* sorrow on the sea, it cannot be quiet.

The *Edomites*, the descendants of *Esau*, are here brought to account. Long grudge, and an old hatred to Jacob and his seed, marked this race : and to this hour the enmity hath not ceased. Gal. iv. 29. I cannot add to the beauty of this passage ; neither is it possible to illustrate and explain it, equal to what is already done by scripture. See Obadiah's prophecy. But, I beg the Reader to notice that verse in it, the 11th, which the Chaldee scripture seems to make a promise of God to Israel, in the midst of this judgment on Esau. I do not say it is so, I only mention it. And it should seem to be very probable : for it is a blessed promise, and hath been found blessed to God's people in all ages.

24 Damascus is waxed feeble, and turneth herself to flee, and fear hath seized on *her* : anguish and sorrows have taken her, as a woman in travail.

25 How is the city of praise not left, the city of my joy !

26 Therefore her young men shall fall in her streets, and all the men of war shall be cut off in that day, saith the LORD of hosts.

27 And I will kindle a fire in the wall of Damascus, and it shall consume the palaces of Ben-hadad.

In the prophecies of Zechariah we have a similar threatening against *Damascus*. Zech ix. 1—8. The Lord is visiting his enemies, and the enemies of his Church, and therefore the day is awful.

28 ¶ Concerning Kedar, and concerning the kingdoms of Hazor, which Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon shall smite, thus saith the LORD: Arise ye, go up to Kedar, and spoil the men of the east.

29 Their tents and their flocks shall they take away: they shall take to themselves their curtains, and all their vessels, and their camels; and they shall cry unto them, Fear is on every side.

Kedar was the son of *Ishmael*, and as the son of the bond-woman mocked, so his posterity. All must be accounted for therefore in the day of judgment.

30 ¶ Flee, get you far off, dwell deep, O ye inhabitants of Hazor, saith the LORD; for Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath taken counsel against you, and hath conceived a purpose against you.

31 Arise, get you up unto the wealthy nation, that dwelleth without care, saith the LORD, which have neither gates nor bars, *which* dwell alone.

32 And their camels shall be a booty, and the multitude of their cattle a spoil; and I will scatter into all winds them *that are* in the utmost corners: and I will bring their calamity from all sides thereof, saith the LORD.

33 And Hazor shall be a dwelling for dragons, and a desolation for ever: there shall no man abide there, nor *any* son of man dwell in it.

We have here the continuation of the same or similar judgments: and all by one and the same Destroyer. It is not to be wondered at

that Babylon should be so lifted up with pride, when the Lord had made Babylon the scourge of all nations!

34 ¶ The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against Elam in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, saying,

35 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will break the bow of Elam, the chief of their might.

36 And upon Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, and will scatter them toward all those winds; and there shall be no nation whither the outcasts of Elam shall not come.

37 For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies, and before them that seek their life: and I will bring evil upon them, *even* my fierce anger, saith the LORD; and I will send the sword after them, till I have consumed them:

38 And I will set my throne in Elam, and will destroy from thence the king and the princes, saith the LORD.

39 But it shall come to pass in the latter days, *that* I will bring again the captivity of Elam, saith the LORD.

I beg the Reader, as he closeth this account, to mark the sweet promise of grace to *Elam*, in the latter days. And when he hath done it, let him consult the Prophet Joel, for the meaning of the phrase *latter days*; and the Acts of the Apostles, for the fulfilment of the promise, when the Holy Ghost was poured out on the *Elamites*, and both will serve to throw a light upon similar promises of grace, in this Chapter. Joel ii. 28, &c. Acts ii. 1—9. and then to 21.

REFLECTIONS.

In reading this Chapter, and beholding the gracious Covenant promises of God in Christ, thus held forth to the full assurance of faith for the final destruction of all the Church's adversaries; every child of God by promise, as *Isaac* was, may well join that hymn of old, and say; *so let all thine enemies perish, O Lord, but let them that love thee be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might!* It is blessed, it is precious to see, that the issue of the holy war is not doubtful. Jesus hath conquered in our name and nature; and He will subdue *for* us and *in* us, all that oppose.

Reader! we find cause however, in the midst of triumph to be humbled, in the recollection, how often through sin and unbelief, those *Ammonites* and *Edomites* vex our souls with their wiles: and act as scourges to chasten the Lord's people, when by sin we transgress. When we provoke the Lord to jealousy with our rebellion, and cause him to hide his face from us, then those enemies gain their advantage over us. But oh! how blessed still to recollect, that He that is for us is more than all that is against us; and he will, as in this Chapter is promised, account with, and rebuke all nations for his people's sake. He will subdue the enemy, and bring all their power low, for his own righteousness' sake, and for his Covenant promise in Christ Jesus!

CHAP. L.

CONTENTS.

Here Babylon, who had been the scourge of so many nations, now comes to be reckoned with herself. Her judgments are described. There are many sweet promises interspersed in this Chapter to Israel.

THE word that the LORD spake against Babylon, and against the land of the Chaldeans, by Jeremiah the prophet.

2 Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces: her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces.

3 For out of the north there cometh up a nation against her, which shall make her land desolate, and none shall dwell therein: they shall remove, they shall depart both man and beast.

The Chapter opens with God's denunciation against Babylon: Israel at this time was in captivity in Babylon. But the hour is now hastening when Babylon is to be destroyed, and Israel delivered. *Bel* and *Merodach*, their two great idols, shall be destroyed.

4 ¶ In those days and in that time, saith the LORD, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping; they shall go, and seek the LORD their God.

5 They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.

6 My people hath been lost sheep; their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away *on* the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their resting place.

7 All that found them have devoured them; and their adversaries said, We offend not; because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice; even the LORD, the hope of their fathers.

8 Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as the he-goats before the flocks.

What a beautiful description is here given of the people's return to their beloved home! Reader! there is such a thing as tears of joy, as well as tears of sorrow. Holy mourners in Christ, come with in the blessing, Matthew v. 4. And observe the beautiful order in the people's return. They are said *first* to seek the Lord their God; God in covenant. This is the first work of grace. And the *second* is like to it; they shall ask the way to God's Church, to Zion. And what is the object of both, but that the Covenant may never more be broken on their part, for the Lord hath never broken it on his. Reader! was there ever a more lovely representation than this? And how exactly it describes your heart, my heart, yea every heart, of a poor returning Prodigal, who by sin hath ran away from God, and is brought back by sovereign grace, to seek the Lord's face sorrowing. And oh! what grace in God to dispose the heart to all this, without which no heart would ever be disposed! What grace to receive the poor returning Prodigal when he hath nothing to bring, and nothing to offer; and when every enemy concluded that they sinned not in wounding them, because they had sinned against the Lord. Luke xv. 17—24.

9 ¶ For lo, I will raise, and cause to come up against Babylon, an assembly of great nations from the north country: and they shall set themselves in array against her; from thence she shall be taken: their arrows *shall be* as of a mighty expert man; none shall return in vain.

10 And Chaldea shall be a spoil: all that spoil her shall be satisfied, saith the LORD.

11 Because ye were glad, because ye rejoiced, O ye destroyers of mine heritage, because ye are

grown fat, as the heifer at grass, and bellow as bulls;

12 Your mother shall be sore confounded; she that bare you shall be ashamed: behold the hindermost of the nations *shall be* a wilderness, a dry land and a desert.

13 Because of the wrath of the LORD it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate: every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues.

14 Put yourselves in array against Babylon round about: all ye that bend the bow, shoot at her, spare no arrows; for she hath sinned against the LORD.

15 Shout against her round about; she hath given her hand; her foundations are fallen, her walls are thrown down; for it *is* the vengeance of the LORD: take vengeance upon her; as she hath done, do unto her.

16 Cut off the sower from Babylon, and him that handleth the sickle in the time of harvest; for fear of the oppressing sword, they shall turn every one to his people, and they shall flee every one to his own land.

Let not the Reader overlook still further testimonies of divine favour to his poor outcasts, in that the Lord sends enemies to destroy Babylon, because Babylon had wasted his people. *Ye rejoiced*, said the Lord, *and were glad, ye destroyers of mine heritage!* Oh! how full of grace this is! And do observe, Reader, moreover, that in the worst of times, Israel was still the Lord's heritage, and the Lord delights to own Israel. Oh! the blessedness of such unspeakable mercy! Deut. xxxiii. 29. And observe once more, the Lord in this passage calls Babylon's oppression of his people *sinning against him*: agreeably to that sweet expression, *whoso toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye.* Zach. ii. 8.

17 ¶ Israel *is* a scattered sheep; the lions have driven *him* away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him: and last, this Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones.

18 Therefore, thus saith the LORD of hosts the

God of Israel ; Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria.

19 And I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied upon mount Ephraim and Gilead.

20 In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and *there shall be none* : and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found : for I will pardon them whom I reserve.

Every verse in this passage is peculiarly striking and gracious. Observe how the Lord speaks tenderly in behalf of his people, and contemptuously of their enemies. A scattered sheep fallen into the jaws of lions. *This king* of Babylon, as if to point to his impotence. And do not overlook, or forget, from this representation, how plain it is, that the Lord is everlastingly watching over his people, and takes particular notice of every one that hurts them. Oh! that every child of God would keep this in remembrance. And, Reader, do not forget to mark down also in the tablet of thine heart; yea, beg of God the Holy Ghost to write it there for thee, that such is the perpetual, unceasing, and soul cleansing efficacy of Christ's blood, that when the iniquity of Israel, and sin of Judah, are sought for, they shall not be found. The Church of Jesus, in the eye of God the Father, by virtue of her union, and oneness with him, is altogether beautiful and lovely. *He beholds no iniquity in Jacob, neither perverseness in Israel.* Jesus declares himself of his spouse, that *she is all fair, and that there is no spot in her.* And he will present her to herself *a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing,* but that she may be for ever unblameable and irreproveable in his sight. Numbers xxiii. 21. Song iv. 7. Ephs. v. 27.

21 ¶ Go up against the land of Merathaim, even against it, and against the inhabitants of Pekod ; waste and utterly destroy after them, saith the LORD, and do according to all that I have commanded thee.

22 A sound of battle *is* in the land, and of great destruction.

23 How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken? how is Babylon become a desolation among the nations!

24 I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art

also taken, O Babylon, and thou wast not aware; thou art found, and also caught, because thou hast striven against the LORD.

25 The LORD hath opened his armoury, and hath brought forth the weapons of his indignation; for this *is* the work of the Lord GOD of hosts in the land of the Chaldeans.

26 Come against her from the utmost border, open her store-houses: cast her up as heaps, and destroy her utterly: let nothing of her be left.

27 Slay all her bullocks, let them go down to the slaughter! woe unto them! for their day is come, the time of their visitation.

28 The voice of them that flee and escape out of the land of Babylon, to declare in Zion the vengeance of the LORD our God, the vengeance of his temple.

29 Call together the archers against Babylon: all ye that bend the bow, camp against it round about; let none thereof escape: recompense her according to her work; according to all that she hath done do unto her: for she hath been proud against the LORD, against the Holy One of Israel.

30 Therefore shall her young men fall in the streets; and all her men of war shall be cut off in that day, saith the LORD.

31 Behold, I *am* against thee, O *thou* most proud, saith the Lord GOD of hosts: for thy day is come, the time *that* I will visit thee.

32 And the most proud shall stumble, and fall, and none shall raise him up: and I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it shall devour all round about him.

I only detain the Reader, to make one remark on this passage, though it furnisheth out many; and the one I beg the Reader particularly to observe is, in my view, a most important one; namely, that Babylon's sin, in the cruelty manifested to Israel, was directed against the Lord. *She hath been proud against the Lord.* Yes! the

hatred manifested against the Lord's people, is on the Lord's account. So saith Jesus, and blessed be his dear name, that it is so. Turn to that scripture, and you will find it. John xv. 18, 19. I know not what the Reader's feelings are at this discovery; but in mine it forms a sweet and precious consideration. I find a holy boldness sometimes to faith, in telling my Lord, that since he hath called me by his grace, and the enemy hates me but the more on his account, surely my Lord will feel constrained to keep me the nearer to himself for this reason, that the foe may not triumph.

33 ¶ Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The children of Israel, and the children of Judah, *were* oppressed together: and all that took them captives held them fast; they refused to let them go.

34 Their Redeemer *is* strong; The LORD of hosts *is* his name: he shall thoroughly plead their cause, that he may give rest to the land, and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon.

And doth not those sweet consolations belong to God's people at all times, and under all exercises. God's Israel, and Judah, are oppressed together. Every hand is against the household of faith. Men may detain them for a while; but they are God's property, and therefore God's care. Their *Goel* kinsmen owns them, and will plead their cause. And when he ariseth, woe to the enemies of his people. He will give rest to his people, and their land shall be in quiet. Isaiah lxxv. 19—25.

35 ¶ A sword *is* upon the Chaldeans, saith the LORD, and upon the inhabitants of Babylon, and upon her princes, and upon her wise *men*.

36 A sword *is* upon the liars; and they shall dote: a sword *is* upon her mighty men; and they shall be dismayed.

37 A sword *is* upon their horses, and upon their chariots, and upon all the mingled people that *are* in the midst of her; and they shall become as women: a sword *is* upon her treasures; and they shall be robbed.

38 A drought *is* upon her waters; and they shall be dried up: for it *is* the land of graven images, and they are mad upon *their* idols.

39 Therefore the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands shall dwell *there*, and the owls shall dwell therein: and it shall be no

more inhabited for ever ; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation.

40 As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour *cities* thereof, saith the LORD ; so shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein.

41 Behold, a people shall come from the north, and a great nation, and many kings shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth.

42 They shall hold the bow and the lance : they *are* cruel and will not shew mercy ; their voice shall roar like the sea, and they shall ride upon horses, *every one* put in array, like a man to the battle, against thee, O daughter of Babylon.

43 The king of Babylon hath heard the report of them, and his hands waxed feeble : anguish took hold of him, *and* pangs as of a woman in travail.

44 Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan unto the habitation of the strong : but I will make them suddenly run away from her : and who *is* a chosen *man*, *that* I may appoint over her ? for who *is* like me ? and who will appoint me the time ? and who *is* that shepherd that will stand before me ?

45 Therefore hear ye the counsel of the LORD, that he hath taken against Babylon ; and his purposes that he hath purposed against the land of the Chaldeans : Surely the least of the flock shall draw them out : surely he shall make *their* habitation desolate with them.

46 At the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth is moved, and the cry is heard among the nations.

I must not detain the Reader, by entering upon the many interesting particulars here enumerated of God's judgments upon Babylon. I only briefly observe, that the history of that kingdom hath fully shewn the truth of the divine predictions. For where is that once great city, whose magnificence and glory was so highly spoken of ?

It is, as the Lord said it should be, now a desert for beasts and the reptiles of the earth. Thus Isaiah prophesied of it, and so it came to pass, and is fulfilled even to this day. Isa. xiii. 19—22. *Cyrus the Persian*, in concert with *Darius the Mede*, as had been predicted of him, opened a passage through the great river *Euphrates*, and entered Babylon by night, while the king and his nobles were reveling in their security. See Isaiah xlv. 1—4. and Daniel v. 30. But though I must not detain the Reader any longer with the mere history of the event, I should lose the chief object of this commentary, did I not humbly follow the steps of the Prophet, explained by the Evangelist, and call the Reader to the *spiritual* illustration of the history of Babylon. All oppressors of God's people act as instruments for the promotion of God's glory. And the final destruction of them is therefore set forth in the scriptures, as the one great design of God. Hence in the book of the Revelations, the Apostle John had it in commission to tell the Church, that this was the spiritual object all along intended. God's love and attention to his Church in Christ, was thus all along shadowed out in all the sacred scriptures; so that as this Chapter concludes the whole history confirms, *at the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth is moved, and the cry is heard among the nations.* Rev. xviii. throughout.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! contemplate in this Chapter, what all Scripture proclaims, and all experience in the history of men and things confirm; God's people must ultimately triumph, and all the enemies of God, and of his Christ, must be destroyed. How little did proud Babylon calculate the dreadful purchase they made when leading Israel into captivity! How little did Egypt suppose, for the deliverance of their poor brick making slaves, Egypt should be destroyed! And how little now, in the present hour, doth mystic Babylon frame an idea, that in one day her ruin will be accomplished. Oh! that the people of God, when racking under chastisement and oppression, would *hear the rod, and who hath appointed it*: and in their transgressions and unbelief, trace the source of the Lord's displeasure. But let them not forget, amidst all, that though like lost sheep, as this scripture beautifully describes them, their shepherds have caused them to go astray, yet they are still the sheep of Christ. And in the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the vale, and both in Jerusalem and Judah, *the flocks must pass again under the hands of him that telleth them.* Oh! the blessedness, when grace inclines the heart, of doing as the poor Captives from Babylon are described, going and weeping, they shall seek the Lord, and shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, to join themselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant that shall not be broken. And as in grace, so in glory, what blessedness will break in upon the soul of all the Lord's outcasts, which here dwell with *Moab*, and are constrained to have their habitation in the *Babylon* of the world, when finally and fully they shall return, and come to the Zion which is above, *with songs of everlasting joy upon their heads, when they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

C H A P. LI.

CONTENTS.

The same subject is prosecuted in this Chapter. The utter destruction of Babylon is declared, and the Lord's judgments upon her determined.

THUS saith the LORD ; Behold, I will raise up against Babylon, and against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise up against me, a destroying wind ;

2 And will send unto Babylon fanners, that shall fan her, and shall empty her land : for in the day of trouble they shall be against her round about.

3 Against *him that* bendeth let the archer bend his bow, and against *him that* lifteth himself up in his brigandine ; and spare ye not her young men ; destroy ye utterly all her host.

4 Thus the slain shall fall in the land of the Chaldeans, and *they that are* thrust through in her streets.

5 For Israel *hath* not *been* forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the LORD of hosts ; though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel.

I beg the Reader particularly to take notice of this last verse. Amidst all the chastisements of the Lord, and the permission given to the enemies of the Church to oppose her, the Lord's own testimony is here given, that neither Israel nor Judah had been forsaken of the Lord of hosts, though their land had been filled with sin. Oh ! what a word of comfort is here to all precious souls, under the various exercises of their pilgrim state !

6 Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul : be not cut off in her iniquity ; for this *is* the time of the LORD'S vengeance ; he will render unto her a recompense.

7 Babylon *hath been* a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunken ; the nations have drunken of her wine ; therefore the nations are mad.

8 Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed; howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed.

9 We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed; forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country: for her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up *even* to the skies.

10 The LORD hath brought forth our righteousness: come and let us declare in Zion the work of the LORD our God.

11 Make bright the arrows; gather the shields: the LORD hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes; for his device *is* against Babylon to destroy it; because it *is* the vengeance of the LORD, the vengeance of his temple.

12 Set up the standard upon the walls of Babylon, make the watch strong, set up the watchmen, prepare the ambushes: for the LORD hath both devised and done that which he spake against the inhabitants of Babylon.

13 O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, *and* the measure of thy covetousness.

14 The LORD of hosts hath sworn by himself, *saying*, Surely I will fill thee with men as with caterpillars: and they shall lift up a shout against thee,

15 He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding.

16 When he uttereth *his* voice, *there is* a multitude of waters in the heavens; and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth: he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures.

17 Every man is brutish by *his* knowledge:

every founder is confounded by the graven image : for his molten image *is* falsehood, and *there is* no breath in them.

18 They *are* vanity, the work of errors : in the time of their visitation, they shall perish.

19 The portion of Jacob *is* not like them : for he *is* the former of all things : and *Israel is* the rod of his inheritance. The LORD of hosts *is* his name.

Again I beg the Reader to remark, how the Lord points to his discriminating grace. The portion of Jacob is not like others. *This people, saith Jehovah, I have formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise, Isaiah xliii. 21.*

20 Thou *art* my battle axe *and* weapons of war : for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms ;

21 And with thee will I break in pieces the horse and his rider ; and with thee will I break in pieces the chariot and his rider ;

22 With thee also will I break in pieces man and woman ; and with thee will I break in pieces old and young ; and with thee will I break in pieces the young man and the maid ;

23 I will also break in pieces with thee the shepherd and his flock ; and with thee will I break in pieces the husbandman and his yoke of oxen ; and with thee will I break in pieces captains and rulers ;

24 And I will render unto Babylon, and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea, all their evil that they have done in Zion, in your sight, saith the LORD.

25 Behold, I *am* against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the LORD, which destroyest all the earth : and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain.

26 And they shall not take of thee a stone for

a corner, nor a stone for foundations ; but thou shalt be desolate for ever, saith the LORD.

27 Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz : appoint a captain against her ; cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillars.

28 Prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes, the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominion.

29 And the land shall tremble and sorrow : for every purpose of the LORD shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant.

30 The mighty men of Babylon have foreborne to fight, they have remained in *their* holds ; their might have failed ; they became as women : they have burned her dwelling places ; her bars are broken.

31 One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to shew the king of Babylon that his city is taken at *one* end,

32 And that the passages are stopped, and the reeds they have burned with fire, and the men of war are affrighted.

33 For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel ; The daughter of Babylon *is* like a threshing floor ; *it is* time to thresh her : yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come.

34 Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, he hath swallowed me up like a dragon, he hath filled his belly with my delicates, he hath cast me out.

35 The violence done to me and to my flesh, *be* upon Babylon, shall the inhabitant of Zion say; and, My blood upon the inhabitants of Chaldea, shall Jerusalem say.

36 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will plead thy cause, and take vengeance for thee; and I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry.

37 And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling place for dragons, an astonishment and an hissing, without an inhabitant.

38 They shall roar together like lions; they shall yell as lions' whelps.

39 In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not awake, saith the LORD.

40 I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams with he-goats.

41 How is Sheshach taken! and how is the praise of the whole earth surprised! how is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations!

42 The sea is come up upon Babylon: she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof.

43 Her cities are a desolation, a dry land and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth *any* son of man pass thereby.

44 And I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up: and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him: yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall.

45 My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD.

Is not this command to the people of God, to go out of Babylon, the same as gospel precepts, 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. Rev. xviii. 4.

46 And lest your heart faint, and ye fear for the rumour that shall be heard in the land ; a rumour shall both come *one* year, and after that in *another* year *shall come* a rumour ; and violence in the land ; ruler against ruler.

47 Therefore, behold, the days come that I will do judgment upon the graven images of Babylon : and her whole land shall be confounded, and all her slain shall fall in the midst of her.

48 Then the heaven and the earth, and all that *is* therein, shall sing for Babylon : for the spoiler shall come unto her from the north, saith the LORD.

49 As Babylon *hath caused* the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon shall fall the slain of all the earth.

50 Ye that have escaped the sword, go away, stand not still ; remember the LORD afar *off*, and let Jerusalem come into your mind.

51 We are confounded, because we have heard reproach : shame hath covered our faces : for strangers are come into the sanctuaries of the LORD'S house.

52 Wherefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will do judgment upon her graven images : and through all her land the wounded shall groan.

53 Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and though she should fortify the height of her strength, *yet* from me shall spoilers come unto her, saith the LORD.

54 A sound of a cry *cometh* from Babylon, and great destruction from the land of the Chaldeans.

55 Because the LORD hath spoiled Babylon, and destroyed out of her the great voice ; when

her waves do roar like great waters, a noise of their voice is uttered.

56 Because the spoiler is come upon her, *even* upon Babylon, and her mighty men are taken, every one of their bows is broken: for the LORD God of recompences shall surely requite.

57 And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise *men*, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is The LORD of hosts.

58 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire; and the people shall labour in vain, and the folk in the fire, and they shall be weary.

If the Reader will compare what is here said, with what is said of mystic Babylon in the New Testament, he will soon perceive what a striking resemblance there is between things temporal and spiritual. Rev. xvii. and xviii.

59 ¶ The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah into Babylon, in the fourth year of his reign: *and this Seraiah was a quiet prince.*

60 So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that should come upon Babylon, *even* all these words that are written against Babylon.

61 And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, When thou comest to Babylon, and shalt see, and shalt read all these words;

62 Then shalt thou say, O LORD, thou hast spoken against this place, to cut it off, that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but that it shall be desolate for ever.

63 And it shall be when thou hast made an end of reading this book, *that* thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates:

64 And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her: and they shall be weary, Thus far *are* the words of Jeremiah.

Here the subject closeth, both to Jeremiah's prophecy, and the predictions against Babylon; and a solemn close it is. The best and truest explanation we find to the whole is in the Book of Revelation; to which I refer. Rev. xviii. 20, 21. What follows in the following Chapter, is purely the history of the event, so that as this scripture saith, Thus far and no farther respecting prophecy, are the words of Jeremiah. The Lord God of the Prophet be adored for what he gave this faithful servant of his to record!

REFLECTIONS.

HERE Reader! we arrive to the termination of Jeremiah's prophecy, and have seen how sure the word of the Lord is, in destruction to his enemies, and in grace and faithfulness to his people. And we who have lived to see, not only the whole accomplishment of the things predicted, but the introduction of that blessed era of his gospel, in whose kingdom all the great events of salvation to God's people are founded, and by whom all nations of the earth are blessed, may well bow down, with thanksgiving and praise, for this precious portion of the word of his grace. Blessed be the Lord for his servant's ministry! And blessed be the Lord for having such precious scriptures handed down to us, for our instruction! And blessed be the Lord, who teacheth us to profit by the ministry of his servants!

Farewell *Jeremiah!* thou faithful servant of the most High God! painful indeed were thine exercises, to have thy ministry so despised and scorned; and thy person treated with such indignity and suffering. But sure was thy reward: and Jesus, in whose name thou didst minister, did not leave thee without witness in the most perilous times. Oh! that the Lord Jesus, in all ages of his Church, would grant tokens to his faithful ones, as to Jeremiah, when opposed by false prophets: and to the *Hunaniaks* and *Pashurs* of the present day, speak in his decision, that they may be *Magor-missibibs* in terror all around. Lord take thine own blessed cause, unto thine own Almighty arm; and in the ordination of thy ministers, as in the case of Jeremiah, make them as a defenced city, an iron pillar and brazen walls, that they may be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Yea, make them what thou wouldest have them to be, and make them more than conquerors, through thy grace helping them, that Jesus may be glorified in their instrumentality, and the souls of thy people made joyful through them, in the Lord our God.

C H A P. LII.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter contains the historical relation of the siege of Jerusalem, the capture of the city and people, and the deplorable treatment of Zedekiah and his Sons, and nobles.

ZEDEKIAH *was* one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem, and his mother's name *was* Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

2 And he did *that which was* evil in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done.

3 For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah till he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

4 ¶ And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth *day* of the month, *that* Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it, and built forts against it round about.

5 So the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah.

6 And in the fourth month, in the ninth *day* of the month, the famine was sore in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the land.

7 Then the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled, and went forth out of the city by night, by the way of the gate between the two walls, which *was* by the king's garden; (now the Chaldeans *were* by the city round about :) and they went by the way of the plain.

8 But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king, and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho: and all his army was scattered from him.

9 Then they took the king, and carried him

up unto the king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath; where he gave judgment upon him.

10 And the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes: he slew also all the princes of Judah in Riblah.

11 Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah; and the king of Babylon bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death.

12 Now in the fifth month, in the tenth *day* of the month, which *was* the nineteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard, *which* served the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem.

13 And burned the house of the LORD, and the king's house; and all the houses of Jerusalem, and all the houses of the great *men*, burned he with fire:

14 And all the army of the Chaldeans, that *were* with the captain of the guard, brake down all the walls of Jerusalem round about.

15 Then Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carried away captive *certain* of the poor of the people, and the residue of the people that remained in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the multitude.

16 But Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard left *certain* of the poor of the land for vine-dressers and for husbandmen.

17 Also the pillars of brass that *were* in the house of the LORD, and the bases, and the brasen sea that *was* in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans brake, and carried all the brass of them to Babylon.

18 The caldrons also, and the shovels, and the

snuffers, and the bowls, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away;

19 And the basons, and the fire-pans, and the bowls, and the caldrons, and the candlesticks, and the spoons, and the cups; *that which was of gold in gold, and that which was of silver in silver,* took the captain of the guard away;

20 The two pillars, one sea, and twelve brasen bulls that *were* under the bases, which king Solomon had made in the house of the LORD: the brass of all these vessels was without weight.

21 And *concerning* the pillars, the height of one pillar *was* eighteen cubits; and a fillet of twelve cubits did compass it; and the thickness thereof *was* four fingers: *it was* hollow.

22 And a chapiter of brass *was* upon it; and the height of one chapiter *was* five cubits, with net work and pomegranates upon the chapiters round about, all of brass: the second pillar also and the pomegranates *were* like unto these.

23 And there were ninety and six pomegranates on a side; *and* all the pomegranates upon the net work *were* an hundred round about.

24 And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the door:

25 He took also out of the city an eunuch which had the charge of the men of war: and seven men of them that were near the king's person, which were found in the city, and the principal scribe of the host, who mustered the people of the land; and threescore men of the people of the land that were found in the midst of the city.

26 So Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard took them, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah.

27 And the king of Babylon smote them, and put them to death in Riblah in the land of Hamath: thus Judah was carried away captive out of his own land.

28 This *is* the people whom Nebuchadrezzar carried away captive: in the seventh year, three thousand Jews, and three and twenty:

29 In the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar he carried away captive from Jerusalem eight hundred thirty and two persons:

30 In the three and twentieth year of Nebuchadrezzar, Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carried away captive of the Jews seven hundred forty and five persons: all the persons *were* four thousand and six hundred.

31 And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, in the five and twentieth *day* of the month, *that* Evil-merodach king of Babylon, in the *first* year of his reign, lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah, and brought him forth out of prison.

32 And spake kindly unto him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon,

33 And changed his prison garments, and he did continually eat bread before him all the days of his life.

34 And *for* his diet, there was a continual diet given him of the king of Babylon, every day a portion, until the day of his death, all the days of his life.

The relation of this history hath been already gone through, almost word by word, in the book of the Kings: so that it would be to swell unnecessarily the relation on any commentary here. If the Reader will compare this Chapter with the account of the siege, and destruction of Jerusalem, as it is rehearsed at large in the 2nd Book of Kings, from the 18th verse of the 24th Chapter, through the whole of the 25th Chapter that follows, (including only a parenthesis, as a por-

tion before related in the 40th Chapter of Jeremiah's prophecy, from the 22nd to the 26th verses) he will find the agreement in all the particulars. I only add therefore, that we ought to pay the greater attention to those portions of the word of God, which the divine wisdom hath been pleased to have twice recorded, as demanding this respect from us. And when we consider the awful subject of which they both treat; and that, notwithstanding the Lord's love to his Church, he will not leave that Church without his severe chastisement; we have abundant reason to observe what the Apostle hath said on these solemn judgements in general, lest for our transgressions the Lord visit us also. *Be not high minded but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee!* Precious Jesus! how blessed is it to see to whom our safety is alone owing; and in whom all our security stands. Lord! hasten thy kingdom, and bring home thine heritage. And let thy redeemed behold the New Testament Babylon destroyed for ever; and all the enemies of our salvation; that that blessed time may soon arrive, when *the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever.* Amen.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! what vast subjects open to our most devout meditation, while going over in the perusal those prophetic writings of the mournful Prophet Jeremiah. How gracious to his Church and people, the Lord is here manifested! How patient, and long suffering! And, finally, what an issue to his mercy! How tried, afflicted, distressed, and exercised, his faithful servant the Prophet! And what a series of the most aggravated provocations, rebellions, and sins, did the people of Israel and Judah set up against the Lord; and against Jeremiah!

Reader! solemnly ponder well the whole subject. Then call to mind the Covenant faithfulness of Jehovah, as the one only cause of Israel's salvation. Oh! the blessedness of that rich mercy and grace given the Church in Christ Jesus, before the world began. Here Reader! centre all your views. Here trace all mercies to their source. In Jesus behold the whole purpose of redemption: and *from Jesus see that you draw all your consolation.* *God in Christ reconciling the world to himself,* explains the whole mystery of redemption, and places the whole on a firm foundation, not to be shaken. May a gracious God, give both to him that writes, and to him that reads, more and more to rest on this Rock of Ages, and to be looking forward with holy faith to that hour when the Lord will bring again Zion, and overthrow all the enemies of the Church, as Babylon, with an everlasting destruction! Amen.